the weekly Standard

CHARLES MURRAY ON GERTRUDE HIMMELFARB'S 'ONE NATION, TWO CULTURES'

Bill Clinton's Favorite Politician

He's America's most overrated mayor and the new chairman of the Democratic party. He plans to run for governor of Pennsylvania, and his ambitions don't stop there. Is Ed Rendell the next Bill Clinton?

BY MATTHEW REES

Sex, Lies, and Hillsdale BY TUCKER CARLSON

Bill Bradley's Garden Party BY MATT LABASH

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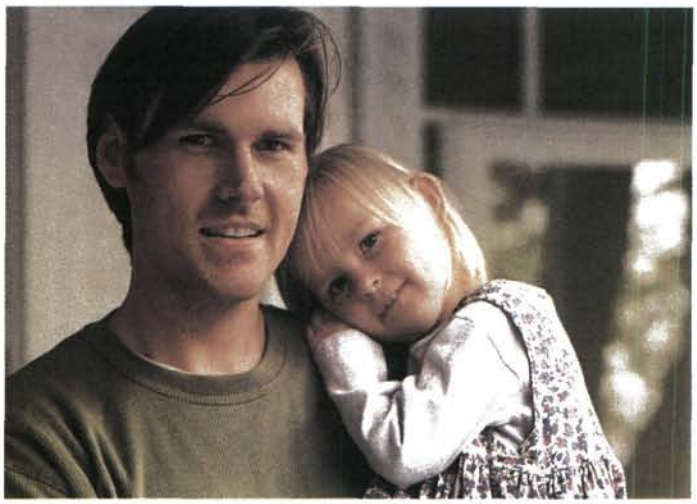

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The Annals of Softball Interviewing

Pat Robertson did a remarkable interview with Li Zhaoxing, China's ambassador to the United States, on the November 10 *700 Club*, Robertson's long-running Christian Broadcasting Network show. Not surprisingly for a Pentecostal evangelist whose CBN WorldReach is the self-proclaimed "first Christian charity to ever be licensed in the People's Republic of China," Robertson spent much of the interview on religious freedom. But he went astonishingly easy on his interlocutor. Li Zhaoxing, remember, represents a government that still jails Christians who don't bend to its will—a government that even now is engaged in a Maoist crackdown on the Falun Gong movement, spiritualists who meditate and practice faith-healing. Because Falun Gong spooked the Beijing government earlier this year with a peaceful gathering in the Chinese capital that caught the authorities by surprise, the movement has been banned and its members are being jailed by the dozen. This, it turns out, is fine by Robertson. Some excerpts:

ROBERTSON: When I was in China, I was assured that there was religious freedom. I went to the various churches and I was quite pleased at the level of freedom in China. But what is happening recently that you'd like to discuss?

LI: Well, the Chinese Constitution provides for the right of the citizens' freedom of religion. Indeed, at the moment we have maybe the biggest religious community among all countries in the world. We have more than 100 million people believing in various religions such as Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, and so forth.

ROBERTSON: There's a sect that has come up, I understand, that the government has felt could not be allowed to continue. Could you tell us about that?

LI: There is a sect, or indeed there is a cult, in China, by the name Falun Gong. Founded in the year of 1992. It is pretty new. It is very damaging and harmful. This cult was led by a gentleman called Li Hongzhi. He was quite a character. And a—he deliberately changed his birthday from July the 7th to May the 31st.

ROBERTSON: Why did he do that?

LI: Well, because he wanted to show off to both that he was the reincarnation of the founder, because that founder was born on the day of May 31st many years ago.

ROBERTSON: This leader deliberately changed his birthday to say I am the reincarnation? He was lying to the people.

LI: Of course he was lying. Besides that, he said he's—he's more elevated than China's founder of Taoism and he's more elevated by far greater even than Jesus Christ. So we can see that this is a man who is good at cheating people. . . .

ROBERTSON: The National People's Congress, I understand, passed a law prohibiting cults. Is this going to ever be applied to Christianity or Buddhism or some other religion?

LI: Not at all. Because the government of China has only outlawed the cult Falun Gong. This has got nothing to do with any religion because the Falun Gong is not a religion. It is nothing but a cult.

ROBERTSON: All right.

The main question raised by this performance is whether, when Robertson collaborates with Beijing's propaganda, he is simply complying with the terms of his charity's license, or does he just not know better? ♦

The Rehabilitation of Gerald Ford

Gerald Ford has perfected the art of ingratiating himself with the liberal establishment that once scorned him for his pardon of Richard Nixon. Last year, Ford put himself at the service of the "let's-find-a-responsible-way-to-save-Clinton" coalition, writing two *New York Times* op-eds. The first urged Congress to avoid impeachment by bringing Clinton to the well of the House for a "harshly-worded rebuke." Then, after the December impeachment vote, he outdid his previous effort by co-authoring another with Jimmy Carter, arguing for censure instead of conviction.

But the fullest display yet of Ford's "principled leadership" came this year. In August, he penned yet another *Times* op-ed, defending the (almost certainly unconstitutional) racial-preference admissions policies of his alma mater, the University of Michigan, currently the target of two lawsuits. After meeting with U of M president Lee Bollinger, Ford signed on to the school's defense that its policies are constitutional because race is only "one of many factors" considered in the admissions process (a factor that—if you have the right skin tone—just happens to count for more than your SAT scores, personal essay, and past community service combined).

It didn't take long for Ford to start receiving his just deserts. Liberal lion Jack White wrote a column in *Time* declaring Ford the "Davy Crockett" of "affirmative action's Alamo." And lo and behold, Michigan has now announced plans to name its School of Public Policy after Ford—apparently it hadn't occurred to them before this year to name it after the only U of M graduate to become president. Still, it's a fitting tribute. Students can now gather at the Ford School to debate whether racial preferences in Michigan admissions are, as Ford describes them, "eminently reasonable." ♦

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Moyers Family Values

THE SCRAPBOOK's favorite liberal columnist, Dan Kennedy of the *Boston Phoenix*, last week updated the long-running saga of America's self-dealing PBS aristocracy, aka Bill Moyers, Inc. As recounted here a few weeks ago, Moyers moralizes at ponderous length about the malign influence of money on everyone's ethics but his own. And his son, it turns out, is a chip off the old man's block. Kennedy describes the origins of the new Web publication TomPaine.com, now being promoted with an ad campaign in the *New York Times* and elsewhere. "What's most interesting about TomPaine.com," he writes, "is who runs it: John Moyers, the son of Bill Moyers and a fellow traveler with his father in the murky world of bigtime foundations.

"Until February of this year, John Moyers was the executive director of the Florence and John Schumann Foundation; his father was and is the president. Bill Moyers got in trouble when it was revealed that his PBS reports on campaign-finance reform focused favorable attention on organizations to which the Schumann Foundation has given millions of dollars, such as the Center for Public Integrity. Schumann also helps pay for public broadcasting, and Knight Ridder's Frank Greve reported recently that John Moyers was not averse to pressuring National Public Radio to cover projects of interest to him.

"Now John Moyers heads the $5 million Florence Fund, spun off from the Schumann Foundation to back various reform efforts. TomPaine.com is among the Florence Fund's beneficiaries, and the younger Moyers serves as its publisher. . . . TomPaine.com . . . is promising, but it's got a way to go before it will be taken seriously. Maybe it simply needs more resources. Perhaps publisher John Moyers can find out whether Florence Fund executive director John Moyers would be willing to fork over some more dough.

"Dad, after all, would understand." ♦

Battle of Wits

There was a shocking outbreak of humor in the Democratic race last week. First Al Gore told a decent joke on himself to the *New Yorker*'s Joe Klein and Jane Mayer. "Bill Clinton sees a car going down the street and he says, 'What are the political implications of that car?'" Gore said, with a chuckle. "I see a car going down the street and I think, How can we replace the internal-combustion engine on that car?" But Gore's rival upstaged him. Bill Bradley told reporter Seth Gitell, "When my car drives by, I want people to wave and say, 'That's Bill Bradley's car, and we want to vote for him.'" ♦

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Casual

Team McDonald's

For most people, New Year's and birthdays are the annual events that remind us we're getting older. Another year, another birthday. But for me, that prompting comes in the form of football. Not the kind you watch, the kind *you play.*

Every Saturday-after-Thanksgiving for the past 10 years, my high-school friends and I have joined in a classic game of football. And every year it is played the same way: full-body contact, with no padding or protection whatsoever. The teams are usually seven on seven, and everyone, at some point in the game, gets the ball—and gets crushed. The first years after high-school graduation, we played from mid-morning until mid-afternoon. We'd take a short half-time break, guzzle down some Gatorade, and then head back to the field to inflict further damage.

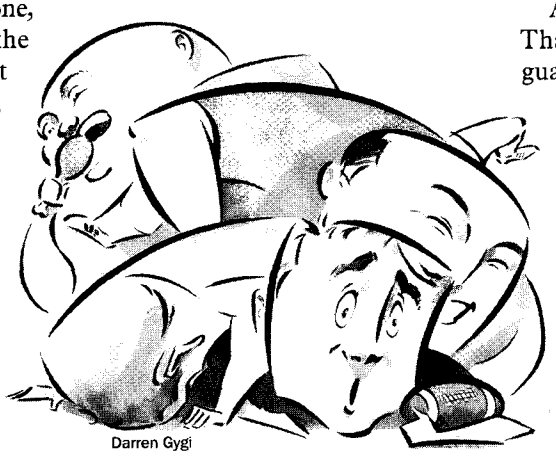
But college life, free of required phys ed, had an impact on our play. With each Thanksgiving that passed, our guys were looking heavier and running slower. Receivers were starting to slip and fall, and the quarterback's beergut made him less agile and more prone to getting sacked. And injuries began to mount. Bloodied knees, gashed lips, sprains, and pulled muscles.

One player, who had previously suffered a dislocated shoulder, aggravated it when he was monster-tackled. Another time, a friend with a size 15 shoe stepped on a guy's neck. One of us still plays despite pins in his upper arm from an arm-wrestling contest gone awry. And once, a player brought his buddy from college who was hit so badly we had to take him to the hospital for an ultrasound. That was the last time we saw him.

Still, we kept on playing, knowing that pain and punishment awaited us.

Then two years ago, my team faced a motley crew who were strangers to all of us but one—and even he scarcely knew these distant in-laws and assorted hangers-on. Obviously, though, they were out for our blood—especially their wiry quarterback, who had a shaved head and tattooed arms. It was an unpleasant experience, with a few personal scuffles, and in the end they ripped us to shreds. Those guys, for reasons apparent, weren't invited back last year.

My friends and I took comfort in the thought that that game was an aberration. But last year, we came up against our younger selves: my classmates' younger brothers. Most of them had played varsity football in high school, and one was playing at the college level. We lost badly. Some of us had taken up smoking and were just plain out of breath. This time, there was no escaping the knowledge that we weren't the athletes we had been in 1990.



Darren Gygi

Now, none of us is quite 30 years old, but we're getting close. In the back of our minds, there's long been a nagging question we have chosen to ignore. But a few weeks ago, two players brought it up: *What if we used flags?*

The very notion sent shivers up my spine. And most of my teammates thought the same: To take down an opponent not by tackling him to the ground but rather by pulling off tiny flags attached to his waist with Velcro? It was a slap in the face. To end a decade of tackle football with humiliating flags would be to admit we were all washed up. That our bodies have had it. One of us pleaded that if we play again this year under tackle rules without protection, we'll lose George, and "he's got to support a wife and kids!" True. So maybe George doesn't *have* to play.

There probably isn't a better example of male stubbornness (and possibly stupidity) than this. That we will someday go from tackling to touching is inevitable; we're all more or less resigned to this by the time we're 30. Just not now.

As the years fly by, that post-Thanksgiving game is a jealously guarded constant in our lives. Same time, same place, even same weather—in 10 years, the Saturday after Thanksgiving has never failed to produce a crisp autumn morning beneath a cold blue sky. Some of us are indeed married, some have children; some still live in Jersey, while the rest have gone to big cities. But when we step onto that field, it's as if we were still in high school.

After the big game, both teams head over to McDonald's for a second Thanksgiving feast. And for the time being, we continue to eat as if we had the metabolism of 18-year-olds. It's awfully hard to consume $10 worth of McDonald's, but after the game, some of us come pretty close. A favorite post-game meal is the Surf 'n' Turf (Big Mac and Filet-O-Fish). And everyone supersizes.

Come to think of it, the eventual shift from tackle to flag football might not even be the ultimate proof of our getting older. Perhaps an even crueler blow will come the day one of us forgoes the Double Big Mac for a Grilled Chicken Salad. Now that will be the final insult.

Victorino Matus

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Pew Poll Perfidy

I was interested in a recent critique of our October 1999 survey that appeared in The Scrapbook ("'Encouraging' News for Al Gore?" Nov. 15). I wish to make two points in response to the analysis of our results.

First, the argument that Democrats were overrepresented in our sample, which thus inflated support for Gore, is based on the assumption that party affiliation represents a *fixed* characteristic of the electorate, much like demographics such as age, sex, or education. It is generally agreed, however, that party affiliation is a much more fluid measure, one that fluctuates over time with changes in public opinion.

Second, while questions were raised about our findings of increased support for Gore, several other national surveys taken at that time also showed growth in support for the vice president. Specifically, we found an 8 percentage point drop in the gap between Gore and George W. Bush from September (when Gore trailed 39 percent to 54 percent) to October (when he trailed 44-51 percent). Over similar time periods, the following polls found comparable results:

¶ The NBC/*Wall Street Journal* poll found a 7-point drop in the gap between Gore and Bush (35-52 percent in September vs. 39-49 percent in October).

¶ The Gallup/CNN poll found an 8-point drop in the gap (39-56 percent in September vs. 43-52 percent in October).

¶ The *New York Times*/CBS News poll found an 8-point drop in the gap (35-52 percent in September vs. 41-50 percent in early November).

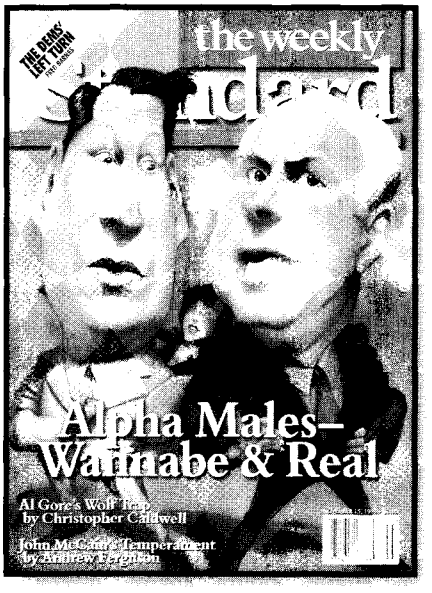
Scott F. Nolde
Pew Research Center
Washington, DC

In Search of Anti-Semitism

It is interesting to note that Pat Buchanan considers himself a true American and questions the American loyalty of his former colleague William Safire ("Buchanan and His Bedfellows," Nov. 8). By implying that Safire, and Jews as a group, have a higher allegiance to Israel, he is expressing opinion, not fact. When one considers the contributions to America that Jews have made in the fields of science, medicine, literature, law, and entertainment, I don't believe they have to defend their patriotism.

It is only natural that most Jews in America would support Israel in its conflicts with countries in the Middle East that wish it harm. Don't the majority of Irish Americans favor Ireland over England in their struggle against what they deem oppression? Where does Buchanan stand on that issue?

The irony here is that Buchanan, who styles himself as a 100 percent American, should ally himself with Lenora Fulani, an anti-Semite who isn't quite sure America is her home, and who is a supporter of Louis Farrakhan, the world-class bigot who rails against bigotry.



I always liked listening to Pat Buchanan on *Crossfire*. I did not always agree with him, but he was interesting and candid. However, now that he has allied himself with professional haters, I don't know if he is doing this because of deep convictions, or to get support in his run for president.

Maurice Baer
Birmingham, AL

I am a Jewish conservative who does not support Pat Buchanan, but it appears that your attacks on him are entirely personal and gratuitous, and therefore demeaning—to you. I know he called The Weekly Standard a "little dinky magazine," but it's time to take the high road and let it go already. Do you really think he's a small step down from Louis Farrakhan, as you said in the Nov. 8 Scrapbook? Come on now, get real. If we readers thought you were joking, it would be funny. But it actually sounds ridiculous, as it truly is.

Additionally, I think you, and others, are too easily prone to call people anti-Semites for their innocuous statements. Doing so cheapens the term and its meaning, just as Democrats cheapen the word "racist" because they use it all the time. In the Scrapbook item, you say it was anti-Semitic for Buchanan to remark that William Safire "has always put Israel a little bit ahead of his own country," noting that a traditional anti-Semitic slander has been to accuse Jews of "dual loyalty." I must remind you that it is not anti-Semitic to state that many Jews have a dual loyalty because many Jews actually *do* have a dual loyalty. I certainly do, and most Jews I know do as well. I happen to think that this loyalty serves the interests of Jews, and of the United States. Perhaps others don't see it that way. But seeing things differently does not necessarily mean anti-Semitism. We are all entitled to our opinions on that question without being labeled. So please do everyone a favor, and save your accusations of anti-Semitism for actual statements that warrant them, and help maintain the term's true meaning.

Stuart Scheer
New York, NY

Isolating the GOP

David Frum's essay on the history of Republican foreign policy had the virtue of recognizing that the real debates have been between those "who trusted in American power" against "those who trust in treaties and moral force" ("The Myth of GOP Isolationism," Nov. 1). He errs, however, in assigning these competing worldviews to the parties. Republican administrations in the 1920s were active in world affairs, but those actions included arms control agreements that gave an expansionist Japan regional dominance, and the farcical Kellogg-Briand Pact "outlawing" war. President Herbert Hoover even dis-

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cussed with British prime minister Ramsay MacDonald the desirability of eliminating all capital ships, tanks, heavy artillery, and military aircraft! This puts the interwar GOP administrations in the camp of Woodrow Wilson rather than Teddy Roosevelt.

Much of the GOP rationale for its disarmament policies was fiscal conservatism. The Washington and London Naval Treaties allowed the United States to cut warship construction to help balance the budget and finance tax cuts. That same mindset is at work today, with Congress refusing to vote more than token increases in President Clinton's defense budget even as the "hollowing" of the military becomes ever more apparent.

Today's GOP continues to embrace President Clinton's Wilsonian principles, such as "engagement" with China and "free trade" under the World Trade Organization, as grand panaceas for all the world's problems. (Frum's notion that interwar GOP trade policy—the one area where the party put TR's principles of national advantage over Wilsonian ideals—"damaged the world economy" is the stuff of FDR's speechwriters, not reality.) If this continues, Republicans may find future historians using far harsher terms than "isolationist" to describe their performance.

WILLIAM R. HAWKINS
Burke, VA

CAP CRAZY

JOSEPH EPSTEIN'S MISSIVE on baseball caps touches a particular nerve with me ("Hats Off," Nov. 15). For five years my wife and I have bemoaned the increasing number of our fellow Americans seen dining both here and abroad "with chapeau," almost exclusively of the baseball variety. Setting aside for a moment the fact that professional and collegiate football, basketball, and hockey team participants now market themselves as baseball players, it remains that increasing numbers of seemingly well-educated and well-situated Americans know not or could care less of this complete infringement on manners.

Although subject to more objective statistical review, I believe I can make the case that this faux pas is inching its way up from the casual diner (still in bad taste) to chain restaurants to fine dining establishments (in California, it seems to be jackets and no ties at even the toniest of restaurants; jackets will be totally gone by the time of the next Bush administration).

I eagerly await THE WEEKLY STANDARD's follow-up essay on the increasing use of profanity in public places without necessity (I am not such a prude as to disdain the proper use of profanity, well directed).

JAMES R. ALLEN
Palo Alto, CA

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'A Distinctly American Internationalism'

George W. Bush's November 19 speech at the Reagan Library represents the strongest and clearest articulation of a policy of American global leadership by a major political figure since the collapse of the Soviet Empire. In his call for renewed American strength, confidence, and leadership, Bush stakes a claim to the legacy of Ronald Reagan.

Like the other major Republican presidential candidates, Bush unequivocally rejects isolationism. More important may be Bush's implicit (but clear) rejection of the sentiments that have animated several Republican congressional forays into foreign policy in recent years. There is no hint of a John Kasich-like delusion that we can maintain American defenses at the current budget level. There is no reluctance to have America engage, wherever necessary around the world. There is no shirking of America's world role; on the contrary, Bush clearly recognizes that role as an essential part of American national greatness. There is no hint of a pseudo-"realist" notion that American principles have to be set aside in favor of exclusive concentration on America's "vital national interests." And there cannot be a clearer repudiation of alleged Republican "unilateralism" than Bush's call for a reinvigoration of NATO, closer ties with Asian allies, and his belief that "international organizations can serve the cause of peace." Bush embraces "a distinctly American internationalism" that consists of "idealism, without illusions. Confidence, without conceit. Realism, in the service of American ideals."

One of the most important sections of Bush's speech is his discussion of U.S. policy toward China. He views China as a strategic competitor rather than a strategic "partner." In calling the conduct of China's government "alarming abroad and appalling at home," Bush, in the spirit of Reagan, locates the source of our competition in the nature of the Chinese regime.

Bush reiterates the importance of support for our democratic Asian friends and allies, from South Korea to Japan to Taiwan. But he goes further. In a statement that will, and should, trouble the leaders in Beijing, Bush looks toward a day when "the fellowship of free Pacific nations is as strong and united as our Atlantic partnership." This is tantamount to calling for a NATO-style alliance in East Asia. In declaring that China "will be unthreatened but not unchecked," Bush states more starkly, certainly than the Clinton administration but also than the preceding Republican administration, that American policy should aim at blunting China's growing power and ambition. Without using the dread word "containment," Bush calls for a policy of containing China.

In his discussion of "the hard work of halting proliferation," Bush offers Americans a clear choice between the Clinton administration's Wilsonian faith in international conventions and a serious effort to combine pressure on proliferators like Russia and China with the deployment of effective missile defenses for the United States and our allies. Bush stands firm in his opposition to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and proposes no phony way of fixing that treaty's fatal flaws. The *New York Times* editorial page and the arms control fraternity will cavil at his straightforward denunciation of the CTBT; the rest of America should appreciate his courageous commitment to the nation's security.

In his stance on the CTBT, as on many other issues, Bush is in basic agreement with the other serious candidates for the Republican presidential nomination. What this means is that the Republican standard-bearer in 2000, whoever it is, will run as the heir to the tradition of Teddy Roosevelt and Ronald Reagan. The Republican party will have rejected the neo-isolationism of Pat Buchanan, the crabbed "realism" of too many congressional Republicans, and the soft-headed multilateralism of the Clinton administration. This is good for the Republican party. It's also good for America—for as Bush says, shrinking from world leadership "has no place in the party of Reagan, or in the party of Truman." It would be nice if the Democrats could once again become the party of Truman. With Bush's speech, we now have considerable confidence that Republicans are once again the party of Reagan—a party that stands for that "distinctly American internationalism" that we believe a majority of Americans embrace.

—*William Kristol and Robert Kagan, for the Editors*

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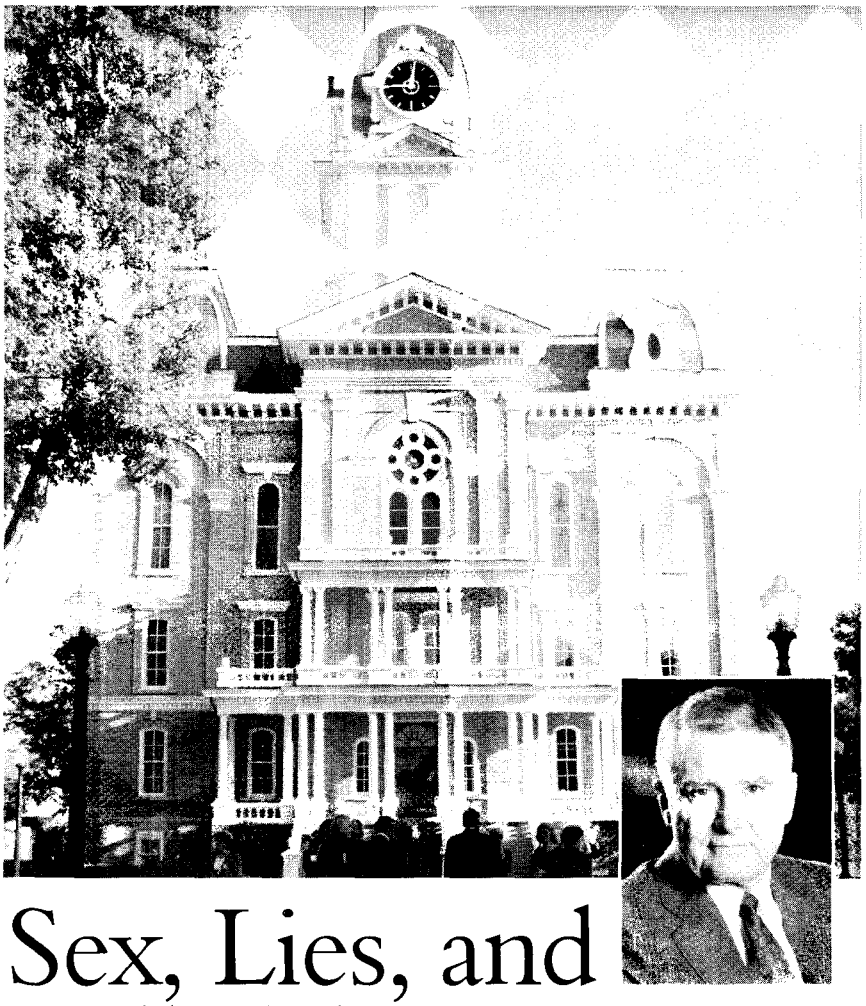

Hillsdale College's main hall and former president George Roche III

Sex, Lies, and Hillsdale (cont.)

How the conservative college is dealing with the aftermath of a scandal. **BY TUCKER CARLSON**

BY THE FIRST WEEK of November it had become clear to the people who run Hillsdale College that the school's president, George Roche III, would have to step down. Roche's daughter-in-law, Lissa Roche, had recently shot herself to death on campus. Rumors that she and Roche had been having an affair were about to make the papers. To mitigate the impending public relations disaster, Hillsdale's board of trustees asked two prominent conservatives—William F. Buckley Jr. of *National Review* and former education secretary William Bennett—to serve on a search committee charged with finding Roche's replacement. Hours before Roche's resignation, Bennett received a call from Hillsdale's director of external affairs, Ronald Trowbridge. Are the rumors about Roche true? Bennett asked. No doubt in my mind, Trowbridge replied. Satisfied that the college was handling the scandal in a straightforward manner, Bennett agreed to lend his name to Hillsdale's search for a new president.

Roche left Hillsdale on November 10. Last Monday, less than a week later, Trowbridge and Bennett spoke again. Bennett had by this time learned more about Roche's relationship with his daughter-in-law and had heard credible allegations about other women, including a student at Hillsdale. He was disturbed by the college's clumsy attempts to cover all this up. Bennett asked Trowbridge what was going on. Well, Trowbridge said, it turns out that reports of President Roche's affair with Lissa Roche are in all likelihood false, just malicious rumors. Huh? said Bennett. What about our last conversation, the one where you said Roche was guilty? Trowbridge didn't respond directly. Instead, he made reference to "the number of lies" Lissa Roche had told him over the years, implying that she had been pathologically dishonest, an untrustworthy nut case who imagined a two decade-long sexual relationship with her son's grandfather.

Bennett was appalled. The following day he resigned as co-chairman of the search committee. "If the college believes that George Roche III is innocent," Bennett wrote in a statement, "then it has an obligation to find out the truth as a condition of clearing his name." In interviews with reporters, Bennett raised the obvious question: If there is a possibility that Roche was falsely accused, why did the board of trustees force him to retire from his job of 28 years and leave the campus? If there were any doubt of his guilt, wouldn't that be grossly unfair?

In other words, there are only two options: Either George Roche III did something terrible, or Hillsdale's trustees did. Yet Hillsdale's administration continued to insist that all sides behaved honorably. Last week, the college sent its contributors a letter announcing Roche's departure. Signed by board chairman Donald Mossey, the reassuring letter went on for two full pages without mentioning the scandal, or even giving a reason for Roche's retirement. "George leaves Hillsdale with a record of distinguished achievement," Mossey wrote.

Not everyone was convinced. Calls poured in to the college from alumni and donors wondering what was going on. One of them came from Russell Fuhrman, a Hillsdale donor from Dubuque, Iowa. Last week Fuhrman called Ron Trowbridge and spoke to him at length about the Roche scandal. "Ron was bitter," Fuhrman recalls, and for good reason. As Trowbridge explained to Fuhrman, Roche —contrary to widespread and "libelous" rumors—actually retired from Hillsdale for health reasons. After 28

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years of tireless work on behalf of the college, Trowbridge implied, Roche's body finally gave out. George Roche: He gave his health for Hillsdale.

At about the same time Trowbridge was trying (unsuccessfully) to spin Russell Fuhrman, the Hillsdale PR department was busy faxing out a new statement on the Roche affair. Written by Trowbridge, it may have been the most inept attempt at damage control ever produced by an academic institution. "The matter is more complex than the world realizes," he wrote, "and circumstantial evidence, that perhaps I alone know firsthand, leads in contrary directions on the charge of adultery." Trowbridge saved the weirdest for last. "I have heard rumors of Lissa's abortion and allegations of George's affairs with students," he revealed. "I have never had one scintilla of evidence that these rumors are true. It is to me entirely conceivable that George Roche is a condemned innocent man."

I alone know firsthand? Lissa's abortion? Condemned innocent man? The statement's teasing references and cryptic language all but dared reporters to dig deeper. (Though several people who know Trowbridge say he seems to have no special information that would indicate Roche is innocent.) Its melodramatic outrage—by the end Trowbridge was all but comparing Roche to Alfred Dreyfus—couldn't have been reassuring to Hillsdale's supporters.

And to a much greater degree than most colleges, Hillsdale needs its supporters. The school accepts no federal funds, and until last month relied entirely on contributions ginned up by George Roche III. At least $50 million of Hillsdale's endowment is held in trusts established by living donors. Hillsdale manages the funds, with the expectation that it will receive full control of them when the donors die. That is, unless a sex/suicide scandal were to spook contributors into yanking their money. If you ran Hillsdale, you'd be worried about the possibility.

The school has received some expressions of support. Last week, William Buckley wrote a signed editorial in *National Review* urging readers not to condemn Hillsdale or its former president. Roche, Buckley wrote, "is a practicing Christian, and like his brothers in the faith he is a sinner; perhaps, even, he has sinned here. But he gave his word as a Christian that he is innocent of this particular wrongdoing, and fellow Christians should accept the formal implications of his pleading." Hillsdale triumphantly faxed the editorial to news outlets. Yet even Buckley is unwilling to say whether he believes Roche slept with his daughter-in-law. "I want to dodge that question," Buckley replies when asked. "It is hereby dodged." ("Such questions excite the tabloid appetites," he explained the following day in a column. "Giving them free expression can bring on moral hangovers.")

The best news out of Hillsdale in weeks is that the long, strange public relations career of Ron Trowbridge may be coming to an end. Trowbridge has become the William Ginsburg of the Roche affair, and the college's acting president, Robert Blackstock, (among many others) is said to be unhappy with his performance. By the end of last week, rumors were circulating at Hillsdale that Ron Trowbridge was about to quit or be fired. He was still in his office on Friday, but his duties, or some of them, seemed to have been taken over by others. The college had brought on a new spokesman—Frank Maisano, a Hillsdale graduate and former Republican Hill staffer who works at a public relations firm in Washington—capable of giving crisp, logical answers to basic questions. And on November 18, the trustees announced their plan to find a law firm "to guide Hillsdale College in an investigation of reported incidents that have led to the retirement of former President George C. Roche, III."

"Reported incidents"? A euphemism, yes. But a lot better than "health concerns," and perhaps even a first step back to respectability. ♦

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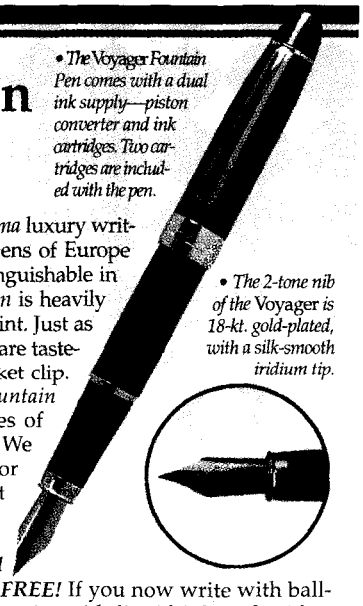

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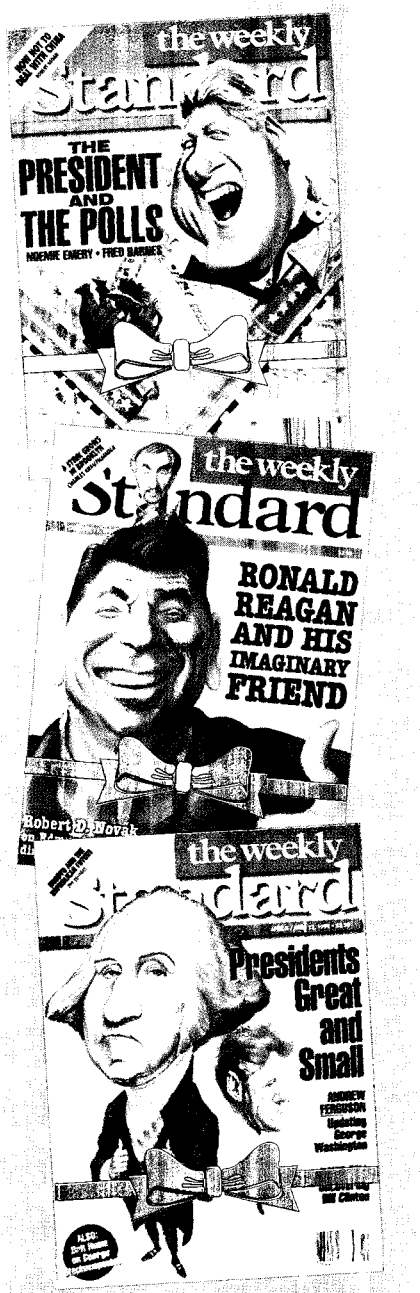

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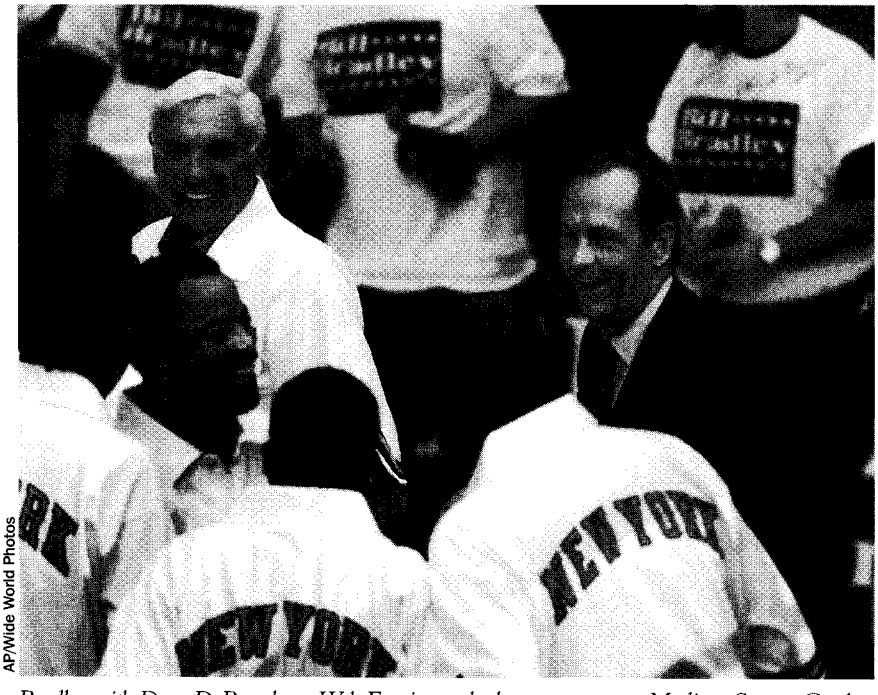
Bill Bradley's Garden Party

The humblest presidential candidate hangs out with his worshipful friends. BY MATT LABASH



AP/Wide World Photos

Bradley with Dave DeBusschere, Walt Frazier, and other teammates at Madison Square Garden

New York

THROUGHOUT BILL BRADLEY'S life, he's been the projection of other people's fantasies. As a basketball star at Princeton, he bedazzled writer John McPhee, who proclaimed him "among the better players . . . in the history of the sport." As a senator, he induced similar hallucinations. A *Newsweek* reviewer once said that "humility . . . bleeds out of every chapter" of Bradley's ponderous memoir *Time Present, Time Past*—an expanded version of his self-important 1995 retirement speech in which he declared politics "broken."

So how does candidate Bradley, with his political toolbelt fastened, come back to fix a political system broken by money? In characteristically humble manner: a $1.5 million fund-raiser at Madison Square Garden, with 20 basketball legends assembled at half court to extol his virtues.

On the morning of November 14, the buzz is in the air hours before the event begins. The Sunday shows are larded with such NBA stars of yore as Bob Cousy and Dr. J. They explain how Bradley's first act as president will be to heal the sick and raise the dead. Bradley's partisans seem to be everywhere, as I discover when taking a seat on the shuttle to New York next to former Maryland congressman and NBA journeyman Tom McMillen—also on his way to the Bradley event.

McMillen licks the newsprint from his fingers while guffawing over a column making fun of the new Al Gore. With Bradley clipping Gore's lead to single digits in New Hampshire, a supreme irony is taking shape. Bradley is rallying in the personality primary without actually having any. Both he and Gore are classic stiffs, but Gore aspires to be more than a stiff and is failing. Bradley, on the other hand, remains an unregenerate stiff, thus convincing reporters that he is not a mere dullard but "authentic."

While McMillen is a Bradley loyalist, one detects a bit of envy. McMillen lost his congressional seat in 1992; Bradley gets to run against Gore. When they played together during Bradley's final NBA season, Bradley roomed with future coaching great Phil Jackson; McMillen got stuck with Luther "Ticky" Burden, who later found himself incarcerated for robbing a bank.

As a competitor, McMillen says, Bradley is a little more complex than his gentleman/sportsman image suggests. When McMillen was a rookie with the Buffalo Braves, he passed Bradley under the basket. "I was guarding my man, he was guarding his, and Bradley gave me an elbow right to my stomach," winces McMillen. "It was gratuitous. It was purposeful. It was gratuitous." He repeats this several more times, then goes silent. A few minutes later, McMillen adds: "I say this with all due respect, you kind of have to be dirty to survive—it's really sort of a jungle." It is unclear if we are talking basketball or politics.

At the Garden, reporters congregate in an upper room to inhale a cold-cuts buffet. The press has been instructed to dress casually and "wear sneakers." The instructions are overkill, as most journalists don't require formal notice to look shabby. We are brimming with important questions for Bradley's handlers. Will Bradley be pronouncing "Bring in Da Noise, Bring in Da Funk," the name of the scheduled dance troupe? Where's the Dijon mustard for our sandwiches? If the unintelligible Moses Malone speaks, will there be a translator?

Matt Labash is a staff writer for THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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Press secretary Eric Hauser arrives to lay down the rules. We are not to leave the room until the appointed time. We are not to speak to Bradley. We must stay together in the "great seats" that have been provided for us (behind the basket, below the nosebleeds). Some bone-weary beat reporter, under the impression he's covering a presidential campaign, asks if any politicians will be speaking on political topics. "No," Hauser says dismissively, "But Bradley will be discussing Third World debt." (It's not clear if he's joking.)

Before the event starts, three of us make like Latrell Sprewell and break the rules. We descend the aisles, push past Bradley supporters on the Garden floor, and infiltrate the players' tunnel, where 20 or so bona fide giants of the game are gathered. You can't turn around without making the acquaintance of Willis Reed's navel, Bill Walton's belt buckle, or Kareem Abdul-Jabbar's zipper. Interspersed among the legends are celebrities such as teen-sensation Usher, singer Bruce Hornsby, and actors Harvey Keitel and Ethan Hawke. They are trying not to look goofy, as they unconsciously emulate the pimp-roll struts of Walt "Clyde" Frazier and Earl "Black Jesus" Monroe, who perfected their gaits as Bradley's teammates in the Superfly era.

I set about the place to find a Bradley friend who can articulate why he should be president. It's instructive to remember that next to politics, there is no vocation whose members use more words to say less than athletes. As an athlete/politician, Bradley is doubly expert at the use of clichés. In fact, he deliberately perfected this as a player who hated talking to the press, once writing that he "tried to utter a few standard comments so often that they lose interest in me." His friends are no less accomplished. Take former Celtic Bill Russell, a strong Bradley booster who, when asked if he finds any particular Bradley issue animating, replies, "No. It's not an issue thing. He's a good guy—a man with immense leadership qualities." Moving on to Oscar Robertson, I ask him what Bradley stands for. "He stands for America," Robertson replies. "Anyone who stands for America is going to be good for everybody."

I have no better luck after moving down the food chain. Suited-up in a European-cut suit and gaudy cross-trainers, actor Ethan Hawke hails from Bradley's senatorial turf in New Jersey. But though he's campaigning for Bradley, Hawke doesn't exactly know if he's voting for him: "Let's see if he gets the nomination," he says. Singer/actor Usher (such a sensation that he requires no last name) opines that "what Bradley offers the world is an opportunity to become more responsible for ourselves and our future. What he allows us is our rights, that we're already given. You know?"

I look for someone more provocative and spot director Spike Lee standing alone in a hallway. One of Bradley's mandates is to "start an honest conversation about race." (Dialogues such as Clinton's "Initiative on Race" and the National Endowment for the Humanities' "Conversation On American Pluralism and Identity" have already been started, finished, and forgotten. But Bradley must have missed them while he was "thinking through the next chapter of the American story.") Lee doesn't praise white politicians often. But he has fanny-patted Bradley for drawing attention to matters racial. Bradley's fetishism of the subject ranks up there with Rep. John Lewis's of Georgia. Of course, Lewis, who is black and was once clubbed on the head by Alabama state troopers, has good reason to dwell on the subject. But Bradley's race fixation seems to spring from the fact that two decades ago he regularly showered with Clyde Frazier and "Black Jesus."

Lee is standing against a wall holding a camcorder, and I realize I have gotten between him and the former Knicks greats. Will he be shooting any Bradley campaign ads? Lee brushes by in icy silence. I make another pass. Lee says hello, shakes my hand, then calls security. Former coaching great Jack Ramsay totters up, mistaking me for someone else, and asks, "Where do you want me to go?" "I need you right over there," I say, pointing at a line of retired players, "and would you please fall in behind Kareem?" As the security force escorts me and the other reporters to our obstructed-view seats, the players and celebrities strut across the court. There's Pearl and Hondo, the Big O and Kareem. After Kareem, trails an obedient Jack Ramsay.

Not much basketball gets played during the two-hour festivities, except when Bradley and former teammates reenact the most storied moment in Knicks history. It was the seventh game of the 1970 championship against the Lakers. The Knicks' injured captain, Willis Reed, wasn't expected to play. But during warmups, he hobbled out of the tunnel, shocking the Lakers' Wilt Chamberlain and inspiring his teammates to victory. With Reed's knee now better, and Chamberlain now deceased, Reed takes a slow-motion pass from Bradley to make an easy layup.

It's a beautiful moment, which not only reconnects Bradley to his basketball past in the service of his political future, but reminds us of his rich tradition of high self-regard. As teammate Jerry Lucas later puts it, "We have assembled here, along with Bill Bradley, probably the most intelligent team that ever played basketball." (Lucas is the memorization fanatic who can recite the entire Manhattan phone book, but he's forgotten about the Celtics and Lakers of the mid-'80s.) So deep are Bradley's tendencies toward pomposity that in his mid-'70s basketball memoir, he wrote of his sporadic bouts of casual sex: "The percentages are that if a man spends enough nights in hotels, he will meet a woman with whom for that night he will share a bed, giving each a brief escape from boredom and loneliness." Mortals might call this "getting laid" and note that the "percentages" are especially favorable for professional basketball players. But the former Rhodes Scholar from

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Princeton terms it the "loneliness of the road oppress[ing] two strangers equally at the same time."

Emcee Robin Roberts, of ESPN, keeps imploring the crowd—some 7,500 fans who have paid $50 to $1,000 apiece—to "raise the roof" (the hand-pumping motion frequently practiced by *Jerry Springer* audiences). It looks foolish but, along with interruptions by a Gore protester in a chicken suit, helps keep people awake during Bradley's narcoleptic stump speech.

Extra Power Bars are also in order during the campaign film, which features grainy footage, piano swells, and Bradley's inspirational riffs: "When I was in high school, I never dreamed of being a pro. I always dreamed of winning the state championship. When I was in college, I dreamed of winning the NCAA championship. And when I got to the pros, I dreamed of only one thing, that's winning the NBA championship." (Possible campaign slogan: Bill Bradley—He Never Gets Ahead of Himself.)

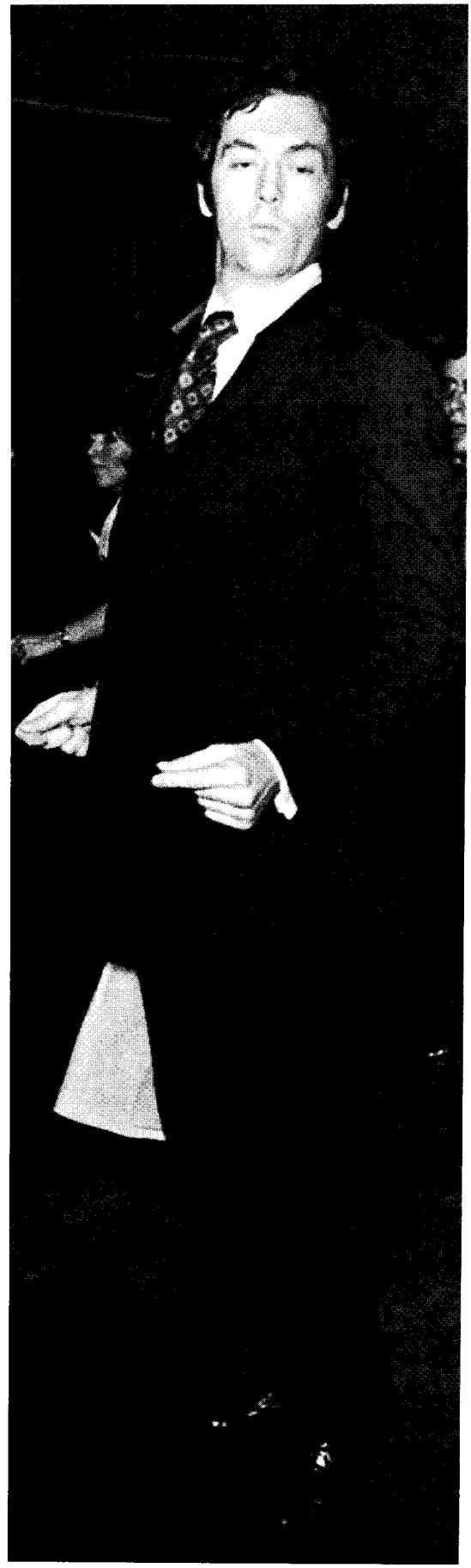
The legends' testimonials aren't much better, as nearly everyone suffers from sports metaphoria. Oscar Robertson asserts that our leaders are always *picked* for us, "now we can do the *pickin'* with Bill Bradley." John Havlicek, celebrating Bradley as "one of the great handcheckers of all time," says that the handprint on "my *backside*" is a reminder that "we are going to *back* him to the hilt."

Even worse are the extrapolations from Bradley's sports career that are fast becoming this campaign season's greatest fiction: that for the good of the team, Bradley became a spectacular passer instead of an NBA scoring machine; that this self-sacrifice is a reflection not just of the player, but of the politician and the man. (New Jersey's Democratic congressional delegation disagrees; most are supporting Gore after years of benign neglect from their senior senator.) In truth, Bradley was not a major scoring threat in the NBA, but not for lack of trying. He attempted an average of 12 shots per game, only 3 less than Walt Frazier, who led the Knicks in scoring during 5 of Bradley's 10 seasons.

Of course statistics don't measure intangibles, such as leadership. But cull his former teammates' period memoirs, instead of listening to their Garden paeans, and a picture emerges of a man frigid and withdrawn, remote and unkempt. Bradley, who as a rookie was paid four times as much as Walt Frazier, often wore the same shirt until he replaced its lost buttons with paper clips. His teammates once stole his ratty raincoat and bought him a new one just to protect the team's image. Dave DeBusschere, in his entertaining memoir *The Open Man*, says former roommate Bradley found his Volkswagen's radio so distracting that he had it removed. "I didn't want to upset him by telling him you can turn off a radio," DeBusschere wrote. Women, too, were distractions, which is why Bradley preferred curling up with the Congressional Record to dating. When Bradley finally did get married, all but one teammate found out about it from the newspapers. Bradley wasn't so much a leader as he was a honking dork.

Back in the Garden, we're on metaphor alert. The non-athlete celebrities are asked to report to the court for a dribbling slalom around Bradley-for-President pylons. Everyone shows but Harvey Keitel, who has gone mysteriously AWOL. A week later, Bradley people still aren't sure why he left. They say Keitel also pulled his pro-Bradley video testimonial, which was supposed to run during the fund-raiser.

It is reminiscent of another episode involving the persnickety actor—when he was cast in Stanley Kubrick's final film, *Eyes Wide Shut*. After conflicts with the director, Keitel fled the set without explanation. Hollywood types thought him foolhardy to abandon a Kubrick/Tom Cruise vehicle that inspired several years' worth of media panting. But the film was released, and Keitel was vindicated. Despite the newsweekly covers and predictions of greatness, it turned out to be an overhyped mediocrity, ultimately rejected by the public. ♦



On the dance floor: Bradley parties down with teammates during the Knicks 71-72 season.

Photo by George Kalinsky from *A Will to Win*, by Willis Reed

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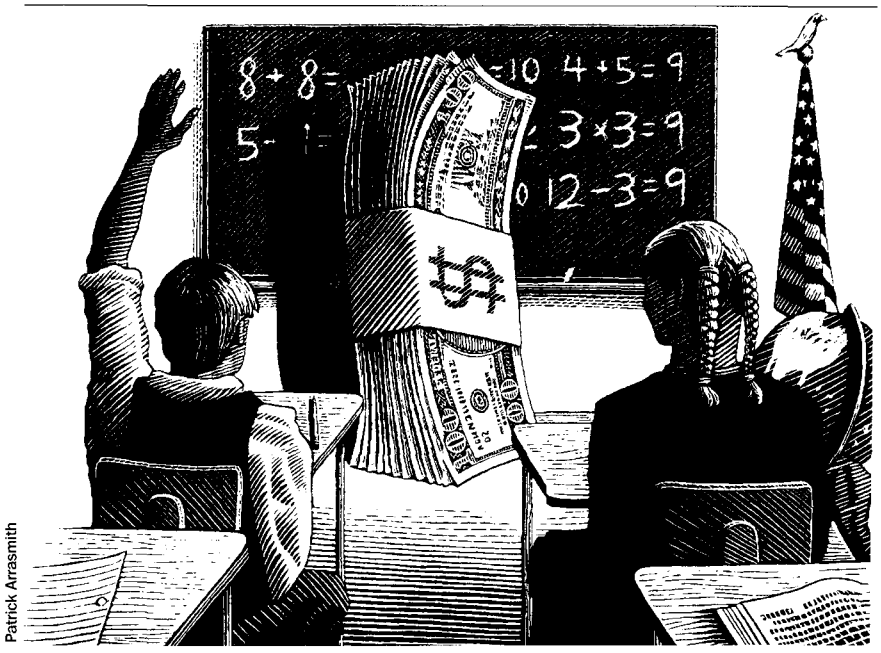
The GOP Congress Fails Again

Congressional Republicans capitulate to some really bad education ideas. BY CHESTER E. FINN JR.



Patrick Arrasmith

THE *NEW YORK TIMES*'S lead education reporter seemed surprised by his own discovery: Hiring more teachers for U.S. schools is harder than it sounds. In New York City this year, seven-eighths of those teachers hired with Washington's help have been doubled up in classrooms with other teachers. There was nowhere else to put them (and the city had to spend part of its windfall to show them how to team-teach). Moreover, just half are certified in their subjects. In tiny Raymondville, Missouri, on the other hand, there's plenty of classroom space but the federal aid formula yielded barely $7,000 for the whole school system, enough to hire just one part-time classroom aide.

School officials in both communities welcomed the extra cash, of course, but as their experience showed the *Times* reporter, "It takes more than money to put an effective teacher in front of a classroom."

That's what makes Congress's capitulation to the White House on the fractious class-size-reduction program so pathetic. Just as Republicans are starting to wrap their minds around a coherent strategy for overhauling federal education aid, Clinton roars back with a politically shrewd, Great Society program that wastes money, ignores most of the research, shoves states and communities around, focuses on what goes into schools rather than what comes out, creates manifold new problems, and fails to accomplish anything important for children. Yet for the second year in a row, Congress caves. Once is a mistake. Twice is fecklessness.

That pretty much describes the first half of the 106th Congress when it comes to education. Lyndon Johnson might as well still be in charge. Big, categorical, Washington-knows-best programs remain the order of the day. Education Department enforcers ride high. State reform schemes and local priorities are undermined. And Clinton runs political circles around Capitol Hill. No wonder surveys find voters more inclined to trust Democrats with the education issue.

Though the new teachers program got most of the ink, the year's premier blunder was the House's renewal of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. This was the first time a Republican majority has ever had a chance to recast the centerpiece of Washington's role in K-12 schooling, and, mostly, they blew it.

Take the so-called Student Results Act, which Education Committee chairman Bill Goodling described as "the largest component of [the GOP] strategy this Congress to improve elementary and secondary education." It doesn't even deal with the whole of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, mainly just the $8 billion Title I program for disadvantaged youngsters. Here, the House embraced the core Clinton strategy: Since Title I, by common consent, hasn't worked these past 35 years, tighten the regulatory screws. And it rejected the only serious idea for overhauling the program: Strap federal money to the backs of low-income youngsters and let them take it to the schools of their choice. Dubbed "portability," this would have transformed the federal role from one of subsidizing school bureaucracies to one of directly aiding needy children. Instead of ever weightier regulation, it would have introduced accountability via the marketplace.

Yet portability was voted down in committee, and two separate versions were clobbered on the floor. Although the Student Results Act purports to allow children trapped in low-performing schools to exit to other (public) schools, their federal aid dollars

Chester E. Finn Jr. is John M. Olin fellow at the Manhattan Institute, president of the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation and co-author of The Educated Child: A Parent's Guide from Preschool through Eighth Grade.

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stay in the failing schools.

One beam of light, however, shone through the gloom. A few hours after wimping out on the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the House narrowly passed the "Straight A's" bill, which treats participating states and cities like giant charter schools, offering them sweeping freedom to spend federal dollars as they see fit in exchange for palpable gains in pupil achievement. Should this measure make it through the Senate and survive a White House veto threat, it would herald a new chapter in U.S. education policy.

Yet Straight A's was bobtailed during the first stage of its legislative journey, turned into a pilot program for no more than 10 states, and shackled by a "hold harmless" provision that assures districts as much money as they would get from the Title I program absent Straight A's. These concessions bought only a couple of Democratic votes and no White House support. They were made to keep skittish Republicans on board. The prospect of actually altering the ground rules of federal education policy gives palpitations to GOP "moderates."

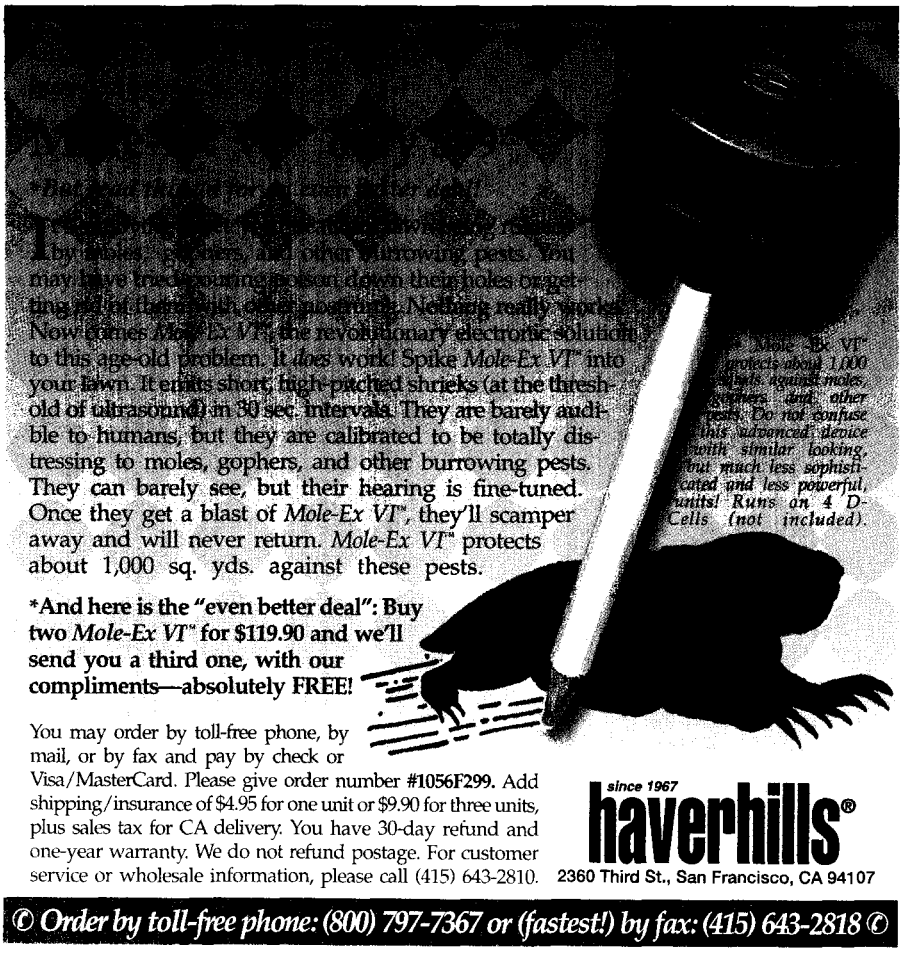
To be fair, Republicans were not exactly overwhelmed by home-state clamor for change. While the Education Leaders Council, a group of dissident education officials such as Arizona's Lisa Graham Keegan, pushed hard for Straight A's, and individual governors wrote in support of it, the Council of Chief State School Officers was bitterly opposed. And the National Governors' Association, reportedly deferring to North Carolina's Jim Hunt, said it could only support Straight A's if Title I were excluded. The problem is that program accounts for two-thirds of the money. No sane state will take the sizable risk of Straight A's—committing to stronger achievement for poor and minority kids—if the National Governors' Association prevails. Straight A's without Title I is Thanksgiving without the turkey.

Why do state and local officials cling to old-line categorical programs rather than welcome the freedom to make decisions for themselves? Some say they don't trust Washington to maintain funding for block grants and other nebulous categories that lack specific constituencies. The deeper explanation is that they've succumbed to the Stockholm Syndrome, the peculiar bond that develops between captor and captive, between terrorist and hostage. They've been locked up for so long by the public school establishment that they've begun to see their jailers' interests as their own.

Congressional Republicans display a touch of the Stockholm Syndrome, too. Their longtime captors—Democrats in general, the Clinton administration in particular, the teachers' unions, and other elements of what Bill Bennett calls "the education blob"—have them brainwashed and cowering. Republicans have repeatedly pumped extra billions into dubious Education Department programs—billions more than even the White House has sought. Another symptom was the House's decision to keep the Women's Educational Equity Act.

This tiny program purports to combat school-based discrimination against girls. In reality, it funds left-wing groups to continue harping on alleged injustices that have been resoundingly disproved by such scholars as Diane Ravitch and Judith Kleinfeld. During the renewal process for the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the education committee proposed to scrap this bit of federally funded agitprop. But a predictable uproar ensued, and when it was hinted that Republicans were being unkind to girls and women, the leadership crumpled. The House reversed its committee. The Women's Educational Equity Act endures. The terrorists remain in control.

Prior to their autumn collapse, House Republicans were showing signs of emerging from captivity. After all, they advanced some good



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ideas. Straight A's still represents a major policy innovation that is miles ahead of the slash-and-burn approach of 1995 and fully compatible with the muscular-yet-flexible stance urged by George W. Bush in his recent trio of education speeches. Likewise, portability has the potential to take the principle of school choice, which enjoys ever wider public support, and apply it to federal K-12 programs without losing their focus on needy kids. Both ideas promote accountability combined with freedom, the double-barrelled school reform strategy that is making such promising headway in states and communities. Taken together, they contain a coherent alternative to 35 years of failed big government programs, one that would resonate with voters while triggering needed change in their children's schools. They are the exact opposite of things like Clinton's class-size-reduction scheme, the Women's Educational Equity Act, and the hyper-regulatory approach to Title I.

But the House's weakened version of Straight A's (and the even weaker "Ed-Flex" measure a few months earlier) was as far as the 106th Congress could get in escaping from its captors. Next year is the Senate's turn. The early signals are not encouraging. Important reforms—Straight A's, portability, and more—can be found in bills written by Slade Gorton, Judd Gregg, Bill Frist, and Tim Hutchinson, as well as Joe Lieberman across the aisle.

But Education Committee chairman Jim Jeffords, working behind closed doors with ranking Democrat Ted Kennedy, has drafted a Stockholm-style measure that makes the House look daring. It basically leaves the Elementary and Secondary Education Act intact and adds a whopping new early-childhood education program. If the Senate heads down that road, serious reformers might prefer legislative gridlock until a real education president can take the wheel. But the GOP will have squandered one of its best opportunities to repair American education and to retain control of Congress. ♦

A Feel-Good Agreement?

The deal for China to enter the WTO won't be worth much without enforcement. BY GREG MASTEL

WITH CONSIDERABLE fanfare, the Clinton administration last week struck an agreement with China that should clear the way for its membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO). On paper, the deal has many positive features. But U.S.-China trade relations are a saga of great press releases and poor results. A verdict on the present agreement must be withheld until it has been tested in practice. As Congress considers the package next year, members will want to make sure that as much energy goes into its enforcement as went into its negotiation.

In principle, China has agreed to lower its tariffs from an average of over 22 percent to an average of about 17 percent. Some tariffs will remain high, including the 25 percent tariff on automobiles. Indeed, Chinese tariffs overall will remain much higher than those of most major trading countries, such as the United States, which have tariffs in the low single digits.

China has also agreed to liberalize some of its service sectors, such as banking and telecommunications. Nevertheless, Western firms will have far less than free access to these markets. In the telecommunications sector, they will be allowed only minority shares in ventures. This represents backsliding from the offer of majority ownership made in April.

America's farmers—promised new access to the Chinese marketplace—may well experience the biggest short-term gains. Most of the barriers to be phased down in this sector are easily verifiable measures, like tariffs, which makes it difficult to cheat. U.S. exports of wheat, feed grains, and other farm products to China are likely to expand.

For the most part, the Clinton administration was able to convince China to agree to the package Washington had offered, then withdrawn in April. The new agreement, however, is merely the beginning of a long process aimed at integrating China into the world economy. Only after other countries, including the European Union, complete their bilateral talks with China will a final multilateral accession protocol be inked. The agreement between the United States and China was the major hurdle, however, and China's WTO membership now seems likely this year.

Whether China's accession is ultimately in the best interest of the United States will depend on whether China can be made to live by the rules of the WTO. If it can, China will become a much more reliable trade and investment partner. Further, the WTO's mandates to reduce subsidies and limit government interference in the economy, if they are followed, could boost reformers' efforts to make China a market economy. Unfortunately, those are very big ifs.

Every trade agreement the United States has struck with China has run into serious enforcement problems. China's compliance with the 1992 agreement on intellectual property was so poor that the United States has threatened trade sanctions on several occasions. The administration officially acknowledges more than half a

Greg Mastel is director of the Global Economic Policy Project at the New America Foundation.

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dozen Chinese violations of the 1992 bilateral memorandum of understanding on market access—an agreement analogous in substance and scope to a WTO accession agreement.

The main problem appears to be that China lacks the legal infrastructure to force its diverse ministries, provincial authorities, and state-owned enterprises to abide by commitments. Within China there is a range of opinions on the wisdom and appropriate pace of economic reform. The group led by Zhu Rongji is interested in Western-style economic reform, but it is only one faction in a contentious political landscape.

Without the rule of law, there is no counterweight to the traditional incentives to cheat on trade agreements and so minimize the economic and political pain of losing noncompetitive industries. Nor is there any means of enforcing orderly resolution of disputes. Compliance problems become barriers to progress sufficient to raise questions about the wisdom of concluding trade agreements in the first place. In short, this is more than a minor irritation.

Many point to the highly unusual public criticism of Zhu's trade concessions inside China as evidence that the new agreement is a good deal for the United States. But it also suggests just how difficult obtaining compliance is likely to be. Zhu apparently did not have wide domestic support for the reforms he offered. Instead of quietly folding their hand, the critics are likely to employ the same bureaucratic tactics used to frustrate past agreements. The welling up of opposition may be evidence that China's concessions will ultimately prove significant, but it may also portend their going unfulfilled.

Some naively argue that the WTO will force the Chinese to deliver. This view both exaggerates the capabilities of the WTO and misapprehends the nature of the Chinese system. Keep in mind, the WTO has proven largely ineffective at convincing even Europe, which maintains a transparent and largely open trading regime, to amend its policies

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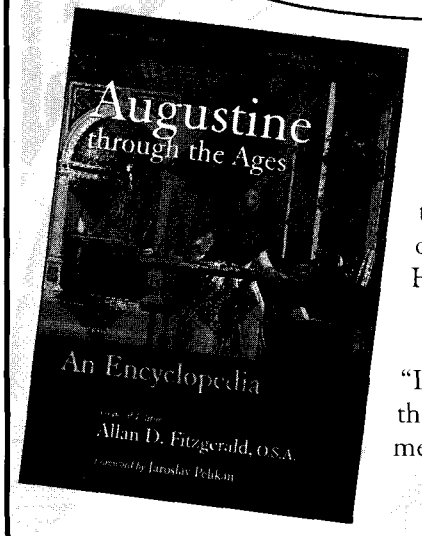

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on banana and meat imports.

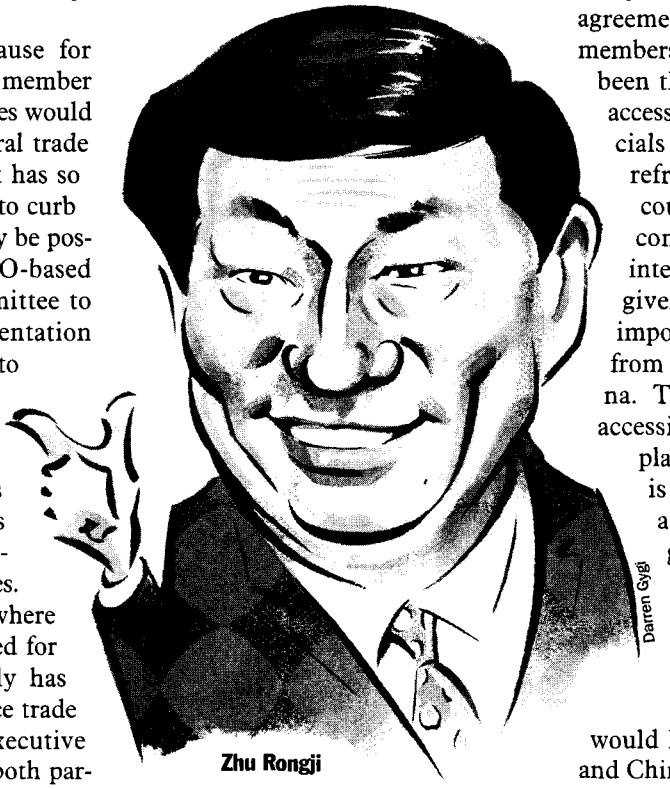
China is a far tougher case. Its economy not only is not based on the rule of law, it also is almost entirely opaque. The WTO relies on transparency in order to evaluate policies and reach enforcement decisions. It may well prove impossible even to establish the existence of protectionist Chinese trade policies before a WTO panel, much less secure rulings against them.

And there is another cause for skepticism: Once China is a member of the WTO, the United States would be expected to forgo unilateral trade sanctions, the only tool that has so far demonstrated the ability to curb Chinese mercantilism. It may be possible to fashion, say, a WTO-based multilateral oversight committee to monitor Chinese implementation without waiting for disputes to arise. And innovative enforcement provisions from past accession arrangements with other countries might allow U.S. authorities to take certain actions if China is not fulfilling its promises.

This may also be an area where a special role could be created for Congress, which historically has been more inclined to enforce trade agreements than the executive branch. Administrations of both parties have seemed more interested in negotiating new agreements than enforcing old ones. Congress has also been willing to confront China, while the executive branch seems forever concerned with poorly defined geopolitical objectives and uninterested in the particulars of trade. Perhaps a formal benchmarking process could be created by which Congress would review Chinese compliance and launch any necessary enforcement actions under U.S. trade law. This could be accomplished without violating the WTO.

It is important to emphasize, again: All of the potential commercial and long-term economic benefits of China's WTO accession depend on the agreement's being enforced. A strong and consistent enforcement process could provide an important boost to reformers in China as well as a boon to U.S. exporters. A meaningful enforcement regime would make the difference between another "press release agreement" and a significant accord.

The merits of any given deal are easily lost sight of amid the customary overselling of trade agreements.


Darren Gygi

Zhu Rongji

Both proponents and opponents of NAFTA grossly exaggerated its impact, and the China package is getting similar treatment. The reality is that China buys a mere 2 percent of U.S. exports—less than Taiwan, Belgium, or Holland. If all goes well, that figure will expand modestly, to perhaps as much as 2.5 percent. At the same time, increased Chinese access to the U.S. textile market will probably expand the U.S. trade deficit with China. There still may be good reason to go forward with the WTO package, but we should do so with realistic expectations.

Beyond that, there looms the issue of China's currency. In order to boost its trade account and combat deflation, Beijing seems to be on the verge of a sharp devaluation. In the short term, devaluation would completely eclipse the benefits to American exporters from a WTO pact. If China joins the WTO but devalues its currency in 2000, the result will likely be increased imports from China, decreased exports to China, and a widening trade deficit.

One unequivocally positive possibility that could be opened by this agreement, meanwhile, is Taiwanese membership in the WTO. China has been the major barrier to Taiwan's accession, but administration officials claim that China will now refrain from objecting. This could be as important for U.S. commercial and foreign policy interests as China's membership, given that Taiwan already imports $3 billion more annually from the United States than China. The case for China's WTO accession is mixed, but Taiwan plainly deserves membership. It is now up to the Clinton administration and the Congress to make sure that the "other China" is not forgotten in the WTO endgame.

At the end of the day, it is difficult to know what effect China's WTO membership would have. It is possible that U.S. and Chinese leaders would lose interest in the process, and the agreement would end up having very little impact. Equally, the WTO might be unable to police China's closed economy. Under the worst case, China would prove too much for the WTO, and the organization would lose its fragile credibility as a result of this failure.

Perhaps the WTO, the U.S. administration, and the U.S. Congress can work together to create effective enforcement mechanisms that would make China's WTO accession a positive event—at best, an event that would help bring the rule of law to China and integrate the world's most populous country into the global economy. But this will require a more hard-headed view of China than the Clinton administration has shown. ♦

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ONCE IN A BLUE MOON

PEOPLE DO THE IMPOSSIBLE

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Bill Clinton's Favorite Politician

Meet Ed Rendell, America's most overrated mayor and the new chairman of the Democratic party.

By Matthew Rees

"I've tried to be president . . . the way Ed Rendell serves as mayor." —Bill Clinton, October 8, 1997

If there's one thing Ed Rendell likes to do, it's talk. Whether the topic is cities, pro basketball, or the University of Pennsylvania (his alma mater), the outgoing mayor of Philadelphia and new chairman of the Democratic National Committee is never at a loss for words. But two subjects especially loosen his tongue. One is himself; the other is Bill Clinton. Get him going on both at the same time, and there's no telling what he might say.

Lisa DePaulo discovered this in January 1994, two years into Rendell's first term as mayor. A writer for *Philadelphia* magazine at the time, she was profiling Rendell when the talk turned to Clinton. "I probably shouldn't say this," Rendell told her, "because it might not be taken right. I don't want to sound conceited, but Clinton and I are very much alike." How so? "We're both gregarious and fun, we both love sports, we both have a genuine affection for politics and government and substance. We're both married to successful women lawyers, we both have one kid the same age, we're both lawyers and former prosecutors. We both have big hearts, we both love junk food and have problems with our weight." Rendell broke it off there, laughing: "You can," he told DePaulo, "draw some other conclusions."

It's not hard to guess what those "other conclusions" might be. For over the course of the day, Rendell, who's said he wants to die the way Nelson Rockefeller did (in bed with a woman not his wife), acted like a royal cad. When DePaulo tripped a metal detector, Rendell urged her to "take it off, Lis. Take *everything* off!" and joked that she "must have a spiked metal bra on or something." Later, he declared Clinton's use of state troopers to procure women "absolutely irrelevant and meaningless," and advanced the dubious theory that the world's greatest leaders have all been philanderers, and the worst leaders faithful husbands. He also crudely described to DePaulo how he thought she'd perform in bed, and told her she should find his appraisal "flattering."

When DePaulo's article was published, the Philadelphia media, which had till then managed to avoid reporting on Rendell's well-known boorishness and interest in women, had a field day. Monikers like "Sex Ed" and "Fresh Prince of the City" were bandied about. The city's two daily papers, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Philadelphia Daily News*, published a combined 14 articles, and local television gave it heavy coverage. The veracity of the reporting was never in question (an *Inquirer* article on the episode was headlined "Rendell 'Bombshell' Surprised Few"). Indeed, a number of women later told DePaulo their own first-person tales of Rendell's bawdy behavior. And while Rendell eventually apologized to DePaulo, he told me recently he'd made only one mistake: "I should have said right at the beginning, everything is off the record."

Soon after DePaulo's piece, a similar account of Rendell's ribaldry was published in the *Daily News*. According to the article, in December 1992 Rendell approached Rosita Youngblood, a local Democratic activist, at a party and started rubbing her shoulders. When she rebuffed his attempt at a hug, he tried some Christmasy banter: "Rosita, that red dress you've got on . . . Do you have any green panties with it?" Youngblood told the *Daily News* she had written two letters seeking an apology: "It was really gross and I was really upset." (She finally got the apology as the *Daily News* article was going to press.)

Matthew Rees is a staff writer at The Weekly Standard.

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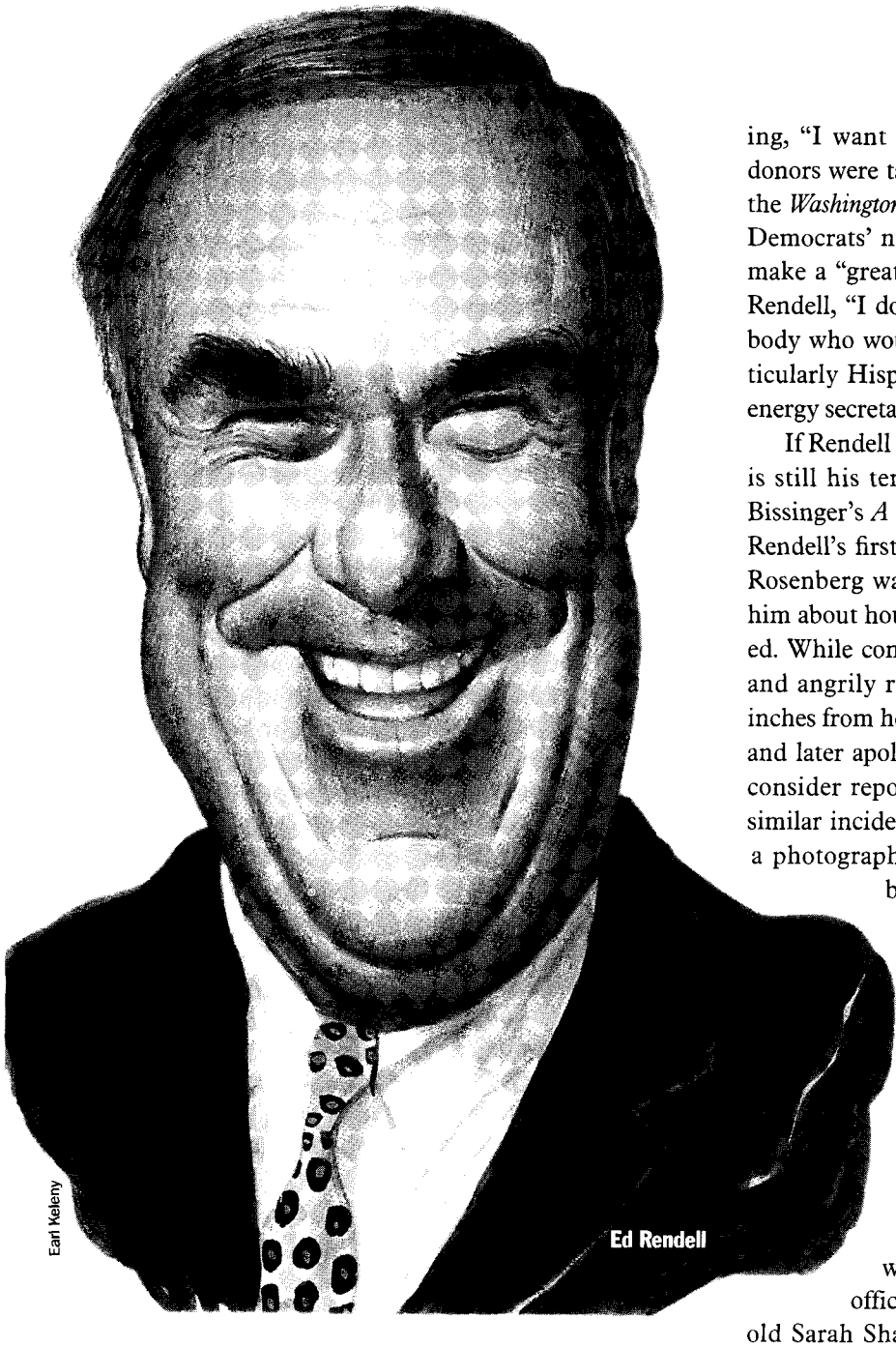

Earl Keleny

Ed Rendell

Rendell's chief of staff didn't dispute the story, claiming only that the mayor had said "underwear," not "panties."

Does it come as a surprise that Slick Willie's favorite mayor is a man nicknamed Fast Eddie?

Rendell's antics in Philadelphia have rarely received national coverage. But he'll be under closer scrutiny now as the Democrats' general chairman, and his hi-jinks could become a real embarrassment for a party still trying to lay to rest memories of Clinton's capers. Thus the concern over Rendell's inauspicious start.

Shortly before his formal election by the members of the Democratic National Committee on September 25, Rendell horrified campaign-finance reformers by declaring, "I want to move away from the past, where big donors were taken for granted." And last month he told the *Washington Post*'s David Broder that if Al Gore is the Democrats' nominee for president, Bill Bradley would make a "great" running mate. But if not Bradley, said Rendell, "I don't know where else Al would find somebody who would really help." Leading Democrats, particularly Hispanics sympathetic to the veep chances of energy secretary Bill Richardson, were irate.

If Rendell manages to keep his candor in check, there is still his temper to worry about. According to Buzz Bissinger's *A Prayer for the City*, an insider's account of Rendell's first term, in May 1994 *Inquirer* reporter Amy Rosenberg was walking with Rendell and questioning him about housing issues when he suddenly grew agitated. While continuing to walk, he put her in a headlock and angrily responded to her questions, with his face inches from hers. He freed Rosenberg after a few seconds and later apologized. But she was shaken up enough to consider reporting Rendell to the police. There was a similar incident a few months later. Upon encountering a photographer from the *Inquirer* at a book party, he barked a derogatory remark at her. When she barked back, according to Bissinger, Rendell "lunged at her and grabbed her arm with such force that his hold caused the beginnings of a black-and-blue mark. He slightly tore her Japanese jacket and started dragging her along with him." Said the photographer, "It was so scary. He attacked me."

Nor are these explosions directed only at the press. In May 1996, Rendell met with a group of high school students in his office to discuss school reform. When 16-year-old Sarah Shapiro challenged some of his statements, Rendell began yelling at her and refused to let her speak, causing her to flee the room in tears. Rendell conceded nothing to reporters, saying Shapiro "gave infinitely better than she got" and that "if there are any apologies to be made, it certainly shouldn't be from me." Not surprisingly, he views his outbursts as a virtue: "Show me someone without a temper, and I'll show you someone who doesn't care very much about things."

Why, given all this, was Ed Rendell made chairman of the Democratic party? Well, he has a superb record as a fund-raiser, having raised $6 million for the 1996 Clinton-Gore reelection effort, and he's a commanding speaker. He also has another Clintonian trait that will serve him well: He's shameless. When Rendell was

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courting the support of City Council president John Street in 1992, he went to a Street fund-raiser and belted out a rendition of "You Are So Beautiful." When he was finished, he kissed Street on the cheek.

But when Democrats explain why Rendell was selected, his talents as a fund-raiser and a salesman aren't usually what gets mentioned. Instead, they give you what's become known as the Philadelphia Story. As Bill Clinton succinctly put it: "There's not a better mayor in America than Ed Rendell."

A powerful mythology has developed around Rendell's record as mayor, stemming from his success in pulling the city out of bankruptcy and off life support in 1992. National political reporters began parachuting in to write him up as a New Democrat capable of governing a big city. The *Washington Post*, to cite a typical example, in 1994 called him a "can-do executive and impresario, capable of creating a sense of possibility where there was none." Rendell's own bio trumpets how he's led Philadelphia through a "remarkable renaissance." Al Gore has dubbed him "America's mayor."

Rendell's tenure as district attorney was tainted by the discovery he'd had 26 parking tickets improperly dismissed.

But now, at the close of Rendell's eight years as mayor, his tenure doesn't look so impressive. Yes, there's a budget surplus. Yes, the city's bonds no longer receive a junk rating from Standard & Poor's. And yes, white-collar professionals no longer profess embarrassment about living in Philadelphia.

Peel back the onion, though, and there's minimal evidence Rendell has tackled the city's underlying problems. Taxes are still among the highest in the country; crime is still rampant; the public schools are disastrous. Philadelphia has suffered a net loss of 150,000 people in the last 10 years, more than any other American city (New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Houston all grew during the '90s). "Much of the last decade's new urban thinking that has put the bloom back on cities from coast to coast has yet to reach the City of Brotherly Love," write Fred Siegel and Kay S. Hymowitz in a recent article about Rendell for the Manhattan Institute's *City Journal.* A comprehensive survey of Philadelphia released in September by the Pew Charitable Trusts nicely captures current informed thinking about the city: "One cannot talk with many leaders in Philadelphia without being struck by a deep malaise of spirit."

Prior to his 1991 election, Rendell appeared to be just another in a long line of characters who clambered up the city's notoriously greasy pole but never lived up to expectations. He was elected district attorney in 1977 when he was just 33, and was easily reelected four years later, but his tenure was tainted by the discovery he'd had 26 parking tickets improperly dismissed (this, after he had forced the resignation of one of his top deputies for doing something similar). The issue haunted him in 1986, when he ran for governor and lost in the Democratic primary. A year later, after having promised black political leaders he wouldn't run for mayor, he jumped into the race against a black incumbent, Wilson Goode, and got slaughtered.

Rendell spent the next few years at a Philadelphia law firm boning up on local issues in preparation for one final run at City Hall. He likes recounting how he'd try to meet with local officials when he was on business travel, and how these conversations were critical in making him a more informed candidate when he ran again in 1991. That may be true, but there's another episode from this period that was more valuable on election day.

In December 1989, Rendell attended an Eagles-Cowboys football game that later became known as the Snow Bowl because the famously raucous Philadelphia Eagles fans never stopped bombarding the field with snowballs. Rendell, it was learned, had bet a drunken fan $20 that he couldn't throw a snowball that would reach the field (they were both sitting in the upper deck). When the fan succeeded and almost hit a referee, Rendell promptly relinquished his $20.

The only problem: A witness recognized Rendell and called Steve Lopez, at the time an influential *Philadelphia Inquirer* columnist. When Lopez called Rendell, the former district attorney denied making the bet and told Lopez he could even call the person who was sitting with him at the game, a Philadelphia lawyer named Cliff Haines. Rendell called Lopez back an hour later and admitted he had in fact made the bet, but that his intent was to stop the hurler from throwing more snowballs. Shortly thereafter, his friend Haines called the columnist, not knowing Rendell had just come clean, and repeated the lie. Lopez wrote two lighthearted pieces about the incident and quoted Rendell saying he had only one regret: making Haines look bad.

The columns actually helped Rendell, gaining him

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AP / Wide World Photos

Ed Rendell and Bill Clinton share some fast food at Philadephia's Liberty Place food court in September 1995.

some notoriety and building up his image as a regular guy. Even so, he wasn't expected to win the mayoral election. Indeed, it's highly unlikely he would have survived the Democratic primary had two black candidates not split the black vote. And he was the underdog in the general election until former mayor Frank Rizzo, who was going to run as a Republican, died a few months before the election.

When Rendell took office in January 1992, Philadelphia had been in a slump for most of 25 years. As manufacturing jobs were lost, the city steadily shed its middle-class residents as well, leaving behind a (mostly) white upper class and a (mostly) black lower class. Wilson Goode, Rendell's immediate predecessor, will forever be remembered as the mayor who in May 1985 ordered city police to drop a bomb on a group of black radicals holed up in a West Philadelphia row house, killing 11 people and destroying 61 homes in the process. It was easy to look accomplished following Goode, who had also refused to tackle the city's countless economic problems. When *City & State* magazine studied the fiscal condition of America's 50 biggest cities in 1991, Philadelphia ranked 50th.

Rendell quickly and dramatically announced that he would head off the financial calamity facing Philadelphia. "Our situation is worse than we thought it could ever be," he said in his inaugural speech. "Projected deficits in the years ahead number in the hundreds of millions of dollars. And the shame of it is that those deficits do not even begin to tell us the costs of their consequences. These costs—the costs of unsafe streets, of dirty neighborhoods, of struggling schools, of shut-down health clinics and recreation centers—these costs are simply incalculable."

Rendell took a number of steps shortly after his inaugural to demonstrate Philadelphia was on the threshold of a new era. But the moment many would remember, thanks to the presence of a few news photographers, came on a Saturday morning in March 1992. That's when the mayor got on his hands and knees and

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scrubbed the tiles in a City Hall ladies' restroom as part of a volunteer clean-up effort, thus helping to deliver on his campaign promise to return City Hall to its original splendor.

Gestures like this laid the foundation for what came next: Rendell's effort to impose long-overdue discipline on the city budget, which was slated to be $250 million in the red. The only realistic way of doing this was to modify the extremely generous contracts under which city workers labored. And to Rendell's credit, he took on the unions and won.

The agreement reached in October 1992, nine months after he'd taken office, contained no wage increases for two years and only incremental increases in the two years after that. Privatization of city services, once taboo, was suddenly an option available to the mayor. City workers, who had been entitled to as many as 47 paid days off each year, were bargained down to 39 (Flag Day was one of the scotched holidays). The overall savings were projected to be $374 million over four years, and the deal was instrumental in bringing Philadelphia's budget back into balance. Rendell was, justifiably, thrilled when a *Wall Street Journal* editorial featured him under the headline "Profiles in Real Courage." He had it framed and hung it on the wall of his City Hall office. "I love being popular," he told a Wall Street audience. "And right now I am extraordinarily popular."

That he was, and had his term ended then, Rendell would be remembered as an unqualified success. Not only had he returned Philadelphia to solvency, but he had shown that a city on life support just might be able to recover.

But it was not to be. Over the past seven years, Rendell has operated on cruise control, never again making the kind of effort he devoted to pushing through the reforms in 1992. He's occasionally compared himself to a doctor who upon being elected found a patient suffering from both a gunshot wound and cancer. The gunshot wound, he said, required immediate attention, while the cancer was more of a long-term problem. It's a clever analogy. Rendell told me he deserves an A+ for his treatment of the gun wound, and a B or B- for the cancer treatment. In fact, though, the cancer has metastasized, and the gunshot wound turns out to have been treated with little more than a Band-Aid.

Consider Rendell's strategy for revitalizing Philadelphia. It's primarily rested on making the city a tourist destination, which he believes will also draw in businesses. "If you do a city right, not only will you attract tourists and conventioneers, but you also develop a strong motivation for corporations to locate there because that's where their workers want to be." He's had some success in this regard, as a number of new hotels are being built downtown, and the Republican party is holding its national convention there next year. But his effort to bring riverboat gambling to the city flopped, and his push to get a new sports stadium constructed went belly-up last week.

The strategy is destined to fail in any case. Countless studies have shown travel and tourism yield narrow benefits and are unlikely to promote long-term economic growth. Moreover, Rendell refused to make changes that might have promoted growth (and his successor, John Street, looks likely to follow his example). Consider Philadelphia's tax burden. A study completed last year by Vertex, a consulting firm, found that for a hypothetical business with $15 million in annual revenues, the combined business taxes would be higher in Philadelphia than in any of the other 26 major American cities it analyzed. This is partly a function of the city's business privilege tax (yes, that's what it's called), a levy on every establishment, profitable or not.

Even more punitive is the wage tax, which hits every person who works within the city limits. When Rendell took office, this tax was 4.96 percent. Today, it's still 4.61 percent (no other city in Pennsylvania has a wage tax above 1 percent). The University of Pennsylvania's Robert Inman concluded that in 1997, a Philadelphia-based business with $323,000 in profits would have saved $11,600 by moving to the suburbs. According to the Pew study, the wage tax is responsible for the flight of nearly half of the 250,000 jobs that have left the city over the past decades (there's been a net loss of between 65,000 and 100,000 jobs just in the '90s). Yet Rendell, who in the beginning of his first term emphasized tax reduction, now says the city's $206 million budget surplus should go toward pay increases for city workers, not tax relief.

The record is similar on crime. Rendell talked at great length about making the city a safer place. Bissinger's account in *A Prayer for the City* shows the mayor was masterful at consoling people whose family members had been murdered. Yet he never made any attempt to institute the kind of reforms that have dramatically reduced the crime rate in New York. When a bipartisan group of state legislators suggested in 1997 that more officers should be placed on the street, Rendell derided the idea as "ludicrous." When the legislators, known as the Gang of Five, kept beating the drums for

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more cops, Rendell began publicizing a 17 percent drop in the city's violent-crime rate.

This was deeply disingenuous, as Rendell surely knew what later investigations would reveal: The police department's unorthodox method of collecting crime statistics heavily undercounted violent crime (it was so bad the FBI stopped accepting Philadelphia's crime count, and the U.S. Justice Department was called in to investigate). It was only under enormous pressure that Rendell agreed to replace the commissioner who had overseen this bogus reporting and install a reformer.

There are a number of other areas where Rendell achieved next to nothing. Even though surveys show the poor performance of Philadelphia's public schools has driven many city residents to move to the suburbs, he never made reform a priority. Bissinger writes that, "cowed by politics, [Rendell] had never brought to the schools anywhere near the intensity that he had given to the union negotiations, or the budget, or economic development." Indeed, Rendell says the single biggest disappointment of his mayoral tenure is not getting more funding for education from the state legislature—a highly revealing response, given that few education reformers believe what Philadelphia's schools lack is money.

In a town, and a party, full of inflated egos, Rendell will feel right at home, alongside folks like Joe Biden and, yes, Bill Clinton.

When it came to privatizing city services, Rendell did have some real achievements in his first few years in office. But in May 1994 the Competitive Contracting Committee received a memo from David Cohen, Rendell's chief of staff, informing them that privatization was no longer a priority. And it wasn't. Three-fourths of the privatization undertaken by Rendell was finished, or underway, by the end of 1994. And in a 1996 deal with labor, he agreed to a moratorium on contracting out city services.

This dismal record notwithstanding, polls show Rendell has remained incredibly popular in a city where politicians are almost universally loathed and distrusted (he's "the only politician in the history of Philly who gets cheered at sports games," according to a recent issue of *Philadelphia* magazine). Why? One explanation is that he is an extremely likable, affable guy—"a frat boy in a suit," as an *Inquirer* editorial once put it—who has kept up a frenetic pace of public appearances as mayor. The running joke among local journalists is that he'll attend the opening of an envelope.

Rendell has also remained popular because he still looks good when compared with his predecessors. (In 1997, a group of academics rated Goode and Rizzo two of the five worst mayors in America since 1960.) Perhaps most important, Rendell has spent his entire eight years as mayor tirelessly touting Philadelphia's virtues not only to its citizens but to the world (his bio accurately describes him as "Philadelphia's No. 1 Cheerleader"). This is appreciated in a city afflicted with a "we're-not-Washington-or-New York" identity crisis, and which had become a national laughingstock in the 1980s. "There's a willingness of Philadelphians to always believe the worst," a community activist recently told the *Inquirer*. "So when you hear somebody who is really optimistic, it takes your breath away."

Rendell has, however, been careful to temper his short-term optimism about Philadelphia with an overarching pessimism. He's often said that no matter how much he achieved, it wouldn't be enough to bring the city back to its former glory. At a recent Senate hearing on financing stadiums, Rendell—who was there to plead for government money—observed that "with mass communications, changes in technology, changes in the type of work that's done in America today, there is no rationale for cities." This is a clever bit of spin, conveniently relieving him of blame for Philadelphia's continued decline. It is, however, deeply flawed, ignoring the recent experience of New York, Milwaukee, and Indianapolis, cities that are thriving under reformist mayors who made a clean break with the failed policies of the past.

Given that Rendell's new post will be entirely political, his policy failures as mayor will hardly matter. Indeed, his most valuable trait during his short stay in Washington—he's expected to return to Philadelphia after the election to run for governor in 2002—will be not his policy wonkery but his supreme self-confidence. In a town, and a party, full of inflated egos, he'll feel right at home with folks like Joe Biden, Charles Schumer, and yes, Bill Clinton. An *Inquirer* reporter asked Rendell last month if he could recall any instances as mayor when he'd made a leadership mistake. Here's the reporter's account of how Rendell answered: "'Hmmm.' He says nothing for 20 seconds, then, 'Um,' followed by another 30 seconds of silence. 'In terms of big, overriding leadership issues, no,' the mayor says finally. 'I can't think of any big ones.'" ♦

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Common Ground?

A historian considers America today

By Charles Murray

UPI / Corbis-Bettmann

The evils of avarice and citizens rejoicing at the triumph of virtue, from The Allegory of Good and Bad Government, *frescoes for the commune of Siena by the Lorenzetti, c. 1340.*

The American Right has for some years been engaged in an internal debate about the relation of virtue to governance. Is it enough to put in place limits on government, or do even good laws need to be backstopped by "virtue in the people" (to use the Founders' phrase) if a free society is to flourish? If virtue in the people is a prerequisite for a free society, what is the role of government in fostering it? And how much virtue do the American people have these days, anyway?

Consensus is emerging on at least the first question. It has always been answered "yes" by social conservatives, but libertarians have also broadly signed on. I can testify that some of the loudest applause from libertarian audiences is drawn by affirmations that a free society depends not just on good laws but on honesty, forbearance, and good will toward one's neighbors. The emerging consensus has been helped along by post-Communist Russia's vivid example of what happens when such virtues are lacking.

But the debate remains fierce about whether the American people are in need of moral renewal and, if they are, whether government can do much about it. Gertrude Himmelfarb's latest contribution to this debate, *One Nation, Two Cultures*, is the most erudite statement of the social conservatives' position. Kinder and gentler than Robert Bork's *Slouching Towards Gomorrah*, more nuanced than William Bennett's *The De-Valuing of America*, Himmelfarb's treatise can serve as a handbook—at least about the nature of our differences—for all parties in this intramural conservative debate. (To disclose my own conflicted position: I am a libertarian who thinks Himmelfarb is one of the nation's great historians.)

One Nation, Two Cultures
A Searching Examination of American Society in the Aftermath of Our Cultural Revolution
by Gertrude Himmelfarb
Knopf, 192 pp., $23

Himmelfarb's "two cultures" theme comes from Adam Smith, who observed in *Wealth of Nations* that the morality of the elite is different from the morality of the common people. The rich can afford to indulge in "luxury, wanton and disorderly mirth, the pursuit of pleasure to some degree of intemperance, the breach of chastity," but the poor cannot. For them, dissipation means ruin. The moral code of the common people reflects this reality, and it is closely linked to religion, which alone can promise consequences so attractive (Heaven) and terrifying (Hell) that they restrain the human impulse to drink, fornicate, and be injudiciously merry.

For a century and a half, America did not have the kind of elite that produces two cultures. The American rich went through an extravaganza of conspicuous consumption in the last half of the 1800s, but they were not much given to "wanton and disorderly mirth." The wealthy in America more often felt

Charles Murray is a Bradley fellow at the American Enterprise Institute.

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obligated to set a prim example when it came to public expressions of manners and morals.

But America has capitalism, in a form purer and more rambunctious than anywhere else, and capitalism has an uneasy relationship with virtue. Capitalism is nourished by institutions such as religion and marriage—nothing is better for building GNP than a society of observant family men—but capitalism's dynamism and rationalism also place it at odds (so it has been widely argued) with the virtues that nourish it. As Joseph Schumpeter put it, writing in the early 1940s, "Capitalism creates a critical frame of mind which, after having destroyed the moral authority of so many other institutions, in the end turns against its own"—an argument that Daniel Bell would famously extend in 1976 with *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism.*

Himmelfarb allies herself with this intellectual tradition and sets out to examine the current state of the four institutions that underpin a successful free society: civil society, the family, the legal/political system, and religion. When I said *One Nation, Two Cultures* could be used as a handbook by all sides to the debate, I had these chapters in mind. Himmelfarb does not start with the 1990s' Clinton scandals or the 1960s' counterculture or even the 1930s' New Deal. Instead, she gives us a précis of the intellectual underpinnings for the debate, which for the United States are a combination of Founders and British thinkers from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, plus a sprinkling of others—Machiavelli, Hobbes, and the ubiquitous Tocqueville. What makes Himmelfarb's sketches of intellectual history valuable is that she has read prodigiously and mastered her sources. Who but Himmelfarb will give us a quotation from John Stuart Mill, the most famous advocate of individualism, urging government "to promote the virtue and intelligence of the people," reminding us even as she does so of the difference between the Mill of the 1859 *On Liberty* and the Mill of the 1861 *Representative Government?*

The intellectual meat and potatoes that fortifies *One Nation, Two Cultures* is most valuable in the discussion of civil society. The concepts of "civil society" and "community" have grown so sloppy in recent years that they are being denuded of meaning. Himmelfarb cuts through the cant to make a few crucial points.

First, she requires that we think about the precise meaning of words. "Civil society" and "community" are historically different concepts. Civil society (what Ferdinand Tönnies called *Gesellschaft*) consists of the institutions that mediate between the individual and the state. Civil society is thus something different from a community (*Gemeinschaft*), which in its original conception does very little mediating with anything outside itself. A community is organic, collectivist, hard to get into, and, once in, hard to get out of. What most people loosely call "communities" today are nothing of the kind. President Clinton used "community" and its plural twenty-three times in his 1996 State of the Union Address, and not one of those uses had any relation to the real meaning of the word. All were Clinton-speak for either "groups of people living in the same geographic area" or "groups of people with the state watching over them."

The question remains, What laws would a President Himmelfarb propose that Historian Himmelfarb thinks will help?

The endless evocations of "civil society" in the op-ed pages of America's newspapers are seldom much closer to the mark. Civil society in its true sense, Himmelfarb reminds us, has a moral dimension. The institutions of civil society are the enforcers of the social norms. "The 'soft' proponents of civil society pay lip service to the idea but lack the will or conviction to implement it," Himmelfarb writes. And so it has come to pass that we hear praise on every side for charity and compassion as virtues, but no one condemning egotism and hedonism as vices. The family is good, but a 1950s mentality about the family is bad. Even the words "vice" and "stigma" make many modern proponents of civil society uncomfortable. This makes no sense to Himmelfarb. "If civil society is to become an effective instrument of social mediation and reformation, it will have to reaffirm the moral principles that give it its distinctive purpose," she writes. "And it can do that only by exercising its authority and using the social sanctions available to it, sanctions that may be as coercive, psychologically if not physically, as the legal sanctions imposed by the state."

All this has badly needed saying in the measured way that Himmelfarb says it. She is less persuasive to a libertarian when she reaches the question of how much we should call upon the power of the state to reinforce this coherent moral code. Himmelfarb's answer is that government can do a lot, argued in a long chapter entitled "Law and Polity: Legislating Morality." But as I read through that chapter trying to find specific examples of government initiatives to reinforce the moral code with which I could argue, I was struck by how few there were.

She invokes Locke, Mill, Tocqueville, and Burke to make the intellectual case that civil society overlaps the political realm. She lays down many sensible statements of principle: "In their eagerness to do away with the nanny state . . . some conservatives risk belittling, even delegitimizing, the state itself." Or, "In denigrating the state, we also risk attenuating the idea of citizenship," opening a provocative discussion of what it means to be a member of the *civitas*. And she mentions instances in which laws can indeed affect behaviors related to morality—divorce law, for example.

But Himmelfarb is a skeptical lady, and her statements of principle are considerably more emphatic than her advocacy for specific reforms, which leads to

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an unanswered question: What laws would a President Himmelfarb propose that Historian Himmelfarb thinks would make a *big* difference? Take the family as an example. Imagine a legislative package that incorporates all the current social conservative nostrums for supporting the family—such things as tax preferences for two-parent families, larger deductions for children, tougher child support requirements for fathers, laws to help mothers stay home with small children. Imagine another legislative package designed by libertarians that wipes out the welfare state and removes every obligation of a man toward a woman or the children she bears except those contracted in marriage (which are strictly enforced). Which package, the social conservative's or the libertarian's, is going to have a huge, positive impact on women's demands on men? On the prevalence and social place of marriage? On the illegitimacy statistics? Himmelfarb can rightly object to the thought experiment on the grounds that it is unrealistic and that policy reforms must start from where we are. But if the question is the role of the state in inculcating virtue, the possibility has to be confronted that a genuinely limited government is the most nurturing environment for strong families, extensive and vigorous mediating institutions, and the kinds of social rewards and punishments—including social stigma—whose erosion Himmelfarb laments.

This hypothesis about the merits of destroying the welfare state is not theoretical. Its logic is consistent with the state of the family, of mediating institutions, and of social controls in pre-FDR America, despite the preceding century and a half of rip-roaring capitalism. Its logic is consistent with the deterioration in every Western industrial nation following the adoption of a welfare state. The historical record cannot be dispositive (because we have no example of a modern industrial state that delayed the beginning of the welfare state past the 1930s), but what the historical record does show is strikingly consistent with the proposition that the welfare state and a metastasizing government, not capitalism, are the great destroyers of family and civil society.

That brings us, however, to the question of just how destroyed family and civil society are in America today. What are we to make of the contemporary state of virtue? Himmelfarb sees in the United States a dominant culture corrupted by the elites, while a subsidiary culture of two-parent families, usually religious, is valiantly trying to rear its children right and to adhere to traditional moral standards.

One Nation, Two Cultures presents a variety of evidence to support this view. But disaggregation is the key to analysis

Gertrude Himmelfarb

Knopf

of American social trends, and disaggregation by socioeconomic class suggests that the upper levels of society are the least depraved. Illegitimacy, perhaps the single most important social problem, is overwhelmingly concentrated in the lowest socioeconomic levels. Divorce is more common among the working class than among the affluent. It is the children of the affluent who are being sent to the most demanding schools and for whom educational and occupational expectations are the highest. Alcoholism, drug abuse, and child abuse are concentrated in the lower classes. The phrase "soccer mom" is in use because it is so common for children in upper-middle-class neighborhoods to be raised by stay-at-home mothers who are as single-mindedly devoted to their children as any nineteenth-century housewife.

None of this is meant to exonerate the intellectual elites—small subsets of the upper socioeconomic levels—from Himmelfarb's critique. She is surely correct in arguing that wrongheaded messages promulgated by the elites during the 1960s and 1970s were major causes of the phenomenon that Daniel Patrick Moynihan has called "defining deviancy down." But there are signs that the moral pendulum has begun to swing in the right direction for the upper three-quarters of American society and that many of the most pernicious elements of elite culture in academia are spent forces. It isn't fair that the same elites who so cavalierly threw bombs at the American culture a few decades ago are among those who find it easiest to recover from the damage they did, but such may be the case.

The two cultures that I see are instead a dominant culture—embracing everyone from the skilled working class through the elites—which is healing, and a second culture—the culture of the underclass, violent, solipsistic, vulgar, hostile—which has become large enough and coherent enough to make inroads into the rest of society, with the lower part of the working class most at risk. If there is an indictment of capitalism to be drawn up, I think it lies in the willingness of the music business, the television networks, and the film industry to put their formidable talents in the service of helping the values of the underclass culture become chic. Societies have always had a remnant with the values of the underclass; it is only in the late twentieth century that these values have been given public standing.

My version of the two cultures is as open to dispute as Himmelfarb's, of course, and it will take the distance of many decades—the historian's distance—before these issues can be adjudicated. Himmelfarb's formidable accomplishment in *One Nation, Two Cultures* is to have reduced a huge subject to its essentials, set it in its historical and intellectual context, and presented the social conservatives' point of view with balance, insight, and wit worthy of her Victorian heroes. ♦

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Witcovering Politics

Jules Witcover on the problems of presidential campaigning. BY FRED BARNES

Jules Witcover has written a presidential campaign book that ranks with Jeff Greenfield's *The Real Campaign*, Theodore White's *The Making of the President 1960*, Hunter Thompson's *Fear and Loathing on the Campaign Trail*, and Dick Morris's *Behind the Oval Office* among the best of the genre. Unfortunately, Witcover's new *No Way to Pick a President* isn't that book. His dazzler was *Marathon*, a tale of the 1976 presidential race that is breathtaking in its scope, detail, and analysis, and still worth reading today.

No Way to Pick a President
How Money and Hired Guns Have Debased American Elections
by Jules Witcover
Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 303 pp., $26

But *No Way to Pick a President* is a sour book—for the simple reason that Witcover, who writes a column with Jack Germond and still covers politics better than almost anyone else, now finds more bad than good in presidential campaigns. He's tired of self-selected candidates, amoral political consultants, the deluge of money, cocky but ignorant reporters, the emphasis on television, and the tone and substance of the campaigns themselves. There isn't much about presidential politics he wouldn't uproot, outlaw, or alter.

You have to agree with a lot of his criticism. Yes, the compression of nearly all the caucuses and primaries into January, February, and March (which is the case in 2000) is an awful innovation that serves neither candidates nor voters. It's true the media shouldn't but usually do play along with the fiction that the "main event" of presidential contests is the actual campaigning across the country by the candidates rather than their television appearances and paid commercials. Witcover is also dead right that "the constant presence of television cameras and tape recorders on the campaign trail inhibits the candidates' willingness to talk candidly with reporters."

But though all that's true, Witcover's remedies for the ills of presidential politics are drastic, utopian, and elitist. He writes warmly about a proposal of consultant John Deardourff to ban all paid television commercials once the party's nominees have been selected. That way, he says, "the clatter of negative commercials would be stilled during the period when the election campaign and the debates draw heavy news coverage on their own." Besides being unconstitutional, this would transfer control of presidential campaigns to the arrogant, unrepresentative group of people the American public would least like to be in charge: the press.

More sensibly, Witcover wants the states, or maybe Congress, to arrange for five presidential primaries or caucuses every other Tuesday from early March through the middle of July. This would give voters more time to judge the candidates, and allow poorly financed candidates who get hot in the early primaries to raise enough money to survive through the later contests. As things stand now, only the well-funded have much chance of enduring. But this reform is unattainable. Most states wouldn't sit still for being assigned a Tuesday to hold their primary. Naturally, Witcover would also curb the amount of money in presidential races, increase the power of the Federal Election Commission, mandate free television time for candidates, institutionalize debates, and so on. You get the picture: Witcover favors liberal campaign finance reform.

But he has more to say than that. And once you get past his pet peeves—Dick Morris, straw polls, President Bush, Vice President Dan Quayle, *The McLaughlin Group*, celebrity journalists, the electoral college, independent expenditures—a lot of it is very smart. Very reactionary, too. Witcover has covered every campaign since 1952, and he prefers the old way of electing presidents. From the 1950s to the 1970s, political reporters got to know the candidates, who were encouraged to spend hours chatting with journalists off-the-record. If they said something spicy, no one would report it. Now, candidates can't count on such restraint, so they rarely share their candid thoughts with the press, and the result is reporting that's much less informed.

Witcover sees the evil influence of television in virtually everything that's gone wrong with presidential politics. When campaign managers discovered that "television advertising is the most cost-effective way to reach the most voters," they lavished funds on it at the expense of old-fashioned ways to stir voters. "Gone were the neighborhood storefront offices in every town of any size and in every section of the big cities, and gone were the volunteers licking stamps and envelopes there, having political discussions with neighbors who came by in search of buttons, bumper stickers, or a good argument," Witcover writes nostalgically.

His thinking about television goes like this: Television requires huge amounts of money, plus consultants to create clever ads, and since the consultants make fat fees, they insist that campaigns be totally television-oriented, which means they get more money yet. And there's one more thing: The emphasis on television requires the use of the most effective type of ad, which turns out to be the negative ad, aired early in the campaign to define one's opponents unfavorably before they can define themselves. That's how campaigns turn into mudfests. There's some rough truth in this, but Witcover surely overstates his case. Negative ads often

Fred Barnes is executive editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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convey more useful (and truthful) information to voters than positive ads, speeches, or debates. In 1988, ads attacking Michael Dukakis for allowing convicted murderers like Willie Horton to spend weekends on furlough provided a valuable insight into the type of liberal governance Dukakis would have brought to Washington.

To his credit, Witcover steers clear of some of the stupider ideas about changing campaigns, notably reviving the smoke-filled room of party leaders to choose presidential candidates. Of course, this is entirely unrealistic in the first place. Party leaders of the sort that picked, say, Warren Harding as the GOP candidate in 1920 don't exist anymore. And second, conservatives most of all should be leery of abandoning the primaries. In 1980, what passes for Republican party leaders now—mainly elected officials and consultants—would never, ever have chosen Ronald Reagan as the presidential nominee. He was no hero to his peers, but Senator Howard Baker was. You can figure out the rest.

For all the faults of presidential campaigns, Witcover's alarmism is undercut by the course of the 2000 race. Sure, money matters, but it guarantees nothing. Texas governor George W. Bush has raised a stupendous amount, yet that hasn't stopped Senator John McCain, with a fraction of Bush's money, from mounting a real challenge. At the same time, the millions spent by Steve Forbes have yet to lift his campaign above the status of also-ran.

And then there's television. The Republican and Democratic presidential races have settled into one-on-one contests, candidates have been winnowed out, and fresh issues have cropped up. Should compassionate conservatism be taken seriously? How much of the budget surplus should be devoted to health care, Medicare, or tax cuts? Must defense spending be increased dramatically? All this has happened without television playing a significant role, or any role at all. So maybe the system is starting to correct itself. At the least, let's allow the 2000 campaign to take its course before imposing solutions to problems that may vanish on their own. ♦

UPI / Corbis-Bettmann

Toddling Towards Gomorrah

The dangers of the myth that a child's first three years are the most important. BY ROBERT M. GOLDBERG

In *Baby and Child Care*, Dr. Benjamin Spock complained of parents who "transmit their excessive competitiveness to their children. An extreme example is the attempt to teach reading to two-year-olds and, in general, to create 'superkids.'"

What Spock saw back in 1985 as the extreme has now become the norm. Across America there's a push to educate children earlier and with greater intensity than ever before. Child-development experts such as T. Berry Brazelton are prescribing preschool to insure kids do not become "stupid, violent or drug abusers or produce stupid children." Packing children off to school while they are still teething is being promoted as the way to boost performance and social competency in the later grades. Over a million videos that teach infants foreign languages (*Baby Einstein*), music (*Baby Mozart*), and words (*Baby Shakespeare*) have been sold since their rollout in 1997. Anxious parents are starting toddlers in on academics, music, dance, art, and language lessons before they enter kindergarten in hopes of getting better test scores and a shot at more prestigious colleges.

The Myth of the First Three Years
A New Understanding of Early Brain Development and Lifelong Learning
by John T. Bruer
Free Press, 256 pp., $25

This preoccupation with how baby is doing is nothing new. Child-development theorists have long argued that secure attachments in infancy are the key to emotional well-being later in life. Now this same cause-and-effect relation is being extended to brain growth, with proponents claiming that neuroscience proves a connection between how children are reared, how well their brains develop, and how successful they are in life. But there's a difference from the old Freudian analysis, for the new child-development theory asserts that unless you nurture a child's brain properly, it is almost impossible to undo the original pattern of growth after the first three years.

This is the thesis fueling the rapid explosion in parental priming of the early developmental pump, and it is at the heart of what John Bruer calls in his careful and calm new book, *The Myth of the First Three Years*. And it is a myth, as Bruer notes, precisely because there is, in fact, no neuroscience to support the claim (as the *New York Times* editorialized) "that the way in which billions of brain cells make connections and devel-

Robert M. Goldberg is senior research fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center.

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op into networks that enable children to become smart, creative and adaptable depends, to a remarkable extent, on how an infant is nurtured."

The origin of the myth of the first three years lies in a 1987 study that showed rats grow more brain cells when placed in cages with interesting (to a rat, at least) environments. Of course, the scientist who ran the experiments never claimed that toy-filled rat cages are equal to *Baby Einstein* videos. Neuroscientists at Rockefeller University have also found that rats learn faster when confined to narrow cages for short periods, but no one seems to be recommending confining children to their cribs to stimulate learning.

It's true that the time from birth to three years old is a critical period, but advocates of the myth—a well-meaning mixture of Hollywood types, child-development experts, and activists—have either misunderstood or misrepresented the brain's plasticity during this critical period. Armed with a collage of brain scans and one-shot studies with results that have never been reproduced elsewhere, let alone published in peer-reviewed science journals, the actor and director Rob Reiner established the "I Am Your Child" organization to mobilize the media and politicians.

Reiner is fond of telling audiences that "by age ten, your brain is cooked, and there's nothing much you can do." That's simply wrong. Recent research suggests that brain cells are generated all the time, that the plasticity of our brain is greater than imagined. Scientists have even found and grown neural stem cells: master cells that can generate any kind of brain cell. They have transplanted them into animals and seen them grow and function. Similarly, the aging brain appears able to compensate for age-related deficits. This finding came one week after the announcement that new, growing cells have been found in aging monkeys' cerebral cortex (the most complex region of the brain).

In fact, intellectual or emotional ground "lost" in early childhood can be regained in adolescence or adulthood. Indeed, many of the articles used to support the myth of the first three years of life actually demonstrate the opposite. William Greenough, one of the neuroscientists often cited by advocates of the myth, notes that his research shows that the plasticity of the brain persists into maturity. Certainly such studies don't prove the necessity for massive governmental intervention. A large study conducted by the National Institute of Child and Human Development found that only 1 percent of the difference in children's verbal skills can be explained by day-care quality; nearly 40 percent of the difference is associated with the mother's intelligence and the home environment. Research by such behavior geneticists as David Rowe and Robert Plomin has stressed the extent to which children themselves, through their innate temperaments and talents, help shape their own environments.

The myth is a means to transmit competitiveness to our children, and it tells them our love is merely for their educational attainment.

When you add the ongoing plasticity of the brain to a model of child development that emphasizes the emergence of individual differences, you come up with a view of children quite different from that held by advocates of the myth of the first three years. As Bruer points out, beyond telling us that we can teach kids regarded as highly unteachable by advocates of the myth—no small thing—neuroscience can tell us little about child development.

That modesty in the application of brain research is telling. Children need to be allowed to grow through trial and error as they make their way through the world. You can be a flop at five and a success at fifty. The job of parents and adults is not to raise kids like thoroughbreds but to provide opportunities for children to grow into responsible, caring citizens with talents and virtues finding full expression.

The advocates of the myth pay lip service to love and laughter and all that, but in the end it's the kid's ability to get into a good college that matters. Stripped of its junk science, the myth simply embodies a child-development process that allows parents to impose their goals on their children as efficiently as possible and frees up private time for work and vacations. What then could be better than a scientifically proven method that triggers adequate synaptic growth during the first three years? Thereafter, nannies, schools, tutors, coaches, therapists, and college-placement counselors can finish the job.

In return for this limited investment, parents and society will receive children who are (again in the words of the *New York Times*) smart, creative, and adaptable. Kids who will do well on the SATs, who will be accepted at the top law and business schools, who will assemble impressive PowerPoint presentations and garner six-figure incomes. In short, the perfect worker bees in the knowledge-based economy. But will they be good citizens, spouses, friends, and neighbors? Will they fear God and cherish life? The myth doesn't fit all that extra credit stuff in its parenting model.

The myth is nothing more than a means for transmitting excessive competitiveness to our children. Worse, it tells children that our love and our time are all for their educational attainment and their neuronal development. Kids force-fed excellence often excel, but the emotional toll it takes on their underparented and unloved lives is considerable. For all their talk about warm and responsive care, the myth-makers' obsession with intelligence and academic performance has forced a competitive model of childhood upon more children at an earlier stage in life than ever before. And because there is no science to prove the connection of rich environments with high brain achievement, the myth's only legacy will be a generation of lost children—emotionally undernourished and isolated in the midst of all their brain-boosting gizmos. ♦

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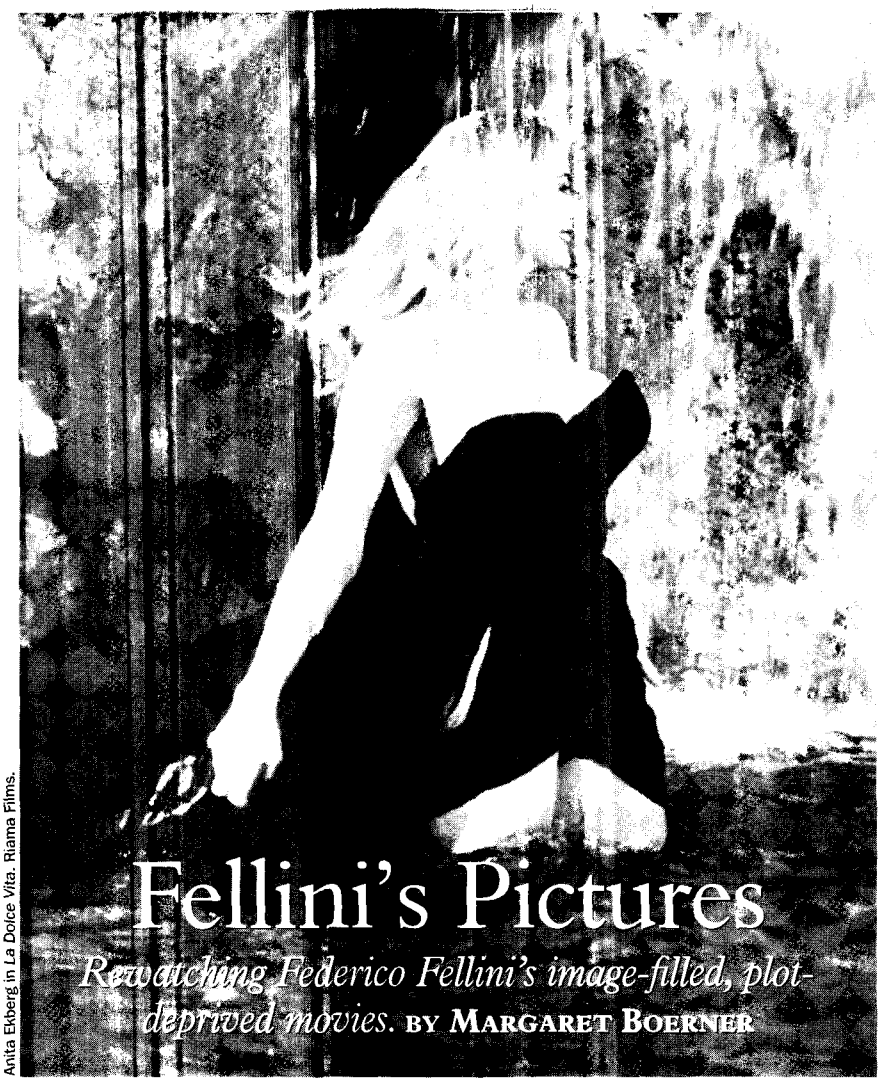

Anita Ekberg in *La Dolce Vita*. Riama Films.

Fellini's Pictures

Rewatching Federico Fellini's image-filled, plot-deprived movies. BY MARGARET BOERNER

What you remember about a film by Federico Fellini are the images. A clown walks a high wire above a village square and sits down in the middle to eat a plate of spaghetti (*La Strada*, 1954). A prostitute is hypnotized and responds to the suggestion that "Oscar" loves her with a "pure and simple love" by breaking into a dance (*Nights of Cabiria*, 1957). A helicopter, bound for the Vatican, whirls over Roman ruins, dangling a large statue of Christ; bikinied girls wave to its pilot from a terrace (*La Dolce Vita*, 1960). A magician leads a movie director's characters in a dance (*8½*, 1963). A knot of wanderers gathers on a marsh to devour a dead plutocrat; a ship waits; suddenly the figures become frozen in an antique fresco, already shattered by time (*Fellini Satyricon*, 1969). A "touched" uncle climbs a tree and bellows, over and over, "I want a woman!" (*Amarcord*, 1974).

Margaret Boerner teaches English at Villanova University.

The scenes are rarely integral to their films' plots—but, then, Fellini's films never have much plot for scenes to be integral to. Even in the early pictures, where his co-writers were attempting traditional stories, Fellini seemed more concerned with peopling a scene. Why—in *Il Bidone* (*The Swindle*), the 1955 film with Broderick Crawford as an aging swindler who gets his just deserts—does Crawford keep back money from his gang? His long-estranged daughter does need money to start a professional life, but to get that money, he's just swindled a crippled girl. Is he redeemed or not? All we are left with is the image of his dying on a hillside. In the 1950 *Variety Lights*, a star-struck girl follows a shabby actors' troupe that has come to her village. She uses the troupe's older, married manager to the top, and we last see her climbing onto a train in a sumptuous fur coat. The manager is left behind. It is not clear whether he has learned any lesson, but the film's vaudeville characters remain—the image of them and the intimacy with which Fellini looks at his characters are what linger in the viewer's mind, far more than the banal plot.

Federico Fellini (1920-1993) grew up in the small resort town of Rimini in Italy on the Adriatic. At twelve years old, he ran away from boarding school to join a circus. (It is hardly a surprise that Fellini adored circuses; if he hadn't known them, he would have had to invent them.) At seventeen, just before World War II, he left Rimini for Rome, where he sold cartoons to newspapers and wrote comic sketches for music-hall performers. At age twenty-three, Fellini married Giulietta Masina, the future star of *La Strada*, *Juliet of the Spirits*, and *Ginger and Fred*, and he was still married to her when he died fifty years later.

After working for the director Roberto Rossellini, Fellini began making his own films, at first without much financial backing—which partly explains his propensity to film in the open squares of Rome and the roads and fields of Italy's coast, where an expensive set did not have to be constructed and expensive lighting was not necessary. His films after *La Dolce Vita* were made in color, but he never lost his eye for sophisticated black and white filming, and his later films in color use a lot of black and white with focal touches of red. He always remembered his early dreams of women, the priests in his boarding school, the farmhouse of his grandparents, and his traveling-salesman father. His career gradually prospered and he could afford to use well-known stars for his leads, but he continued to use unschooled Romans ("natural actors") to people his films—a trademark touch for which he was sometimes criticized.

Fellini directed twenty-four films, from the 1950 *Variety Lights* to the 1989 *Voice of the Moon*, and wrote the script for many more. In 1960 he won the Cannes Golden Palm Award for *La Dolce Vita*, and in 1987 he won the Cannes Fortieth-Anniversary Prize for *Intervista*. Hollywood gave him Oscars for Best Foreign Film for *La Strada* in 1957, *Nights of Cabiria* in 1958, *8½* in 1964, and *Amarcord* in 1975, and bestowed an honorary Oscar on him in 1993.

Rossellini schooled Fellini in the old-fashioned method of Italian films—a lot

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like silent pictures, with an emphasis on visual effects and dialogue dubbed in later. But Rossellini also showed Fellini the "neo-realism" of Italian cinema after World War II, which offered detailed observation of social behavior.

At its most academic, neo-realism postulated that the camera should just follow people around and record what is "really" out there in "real" life. Rossellini's *Open City* and *Paisan* were filmed on this principle. And yet, the impact of the Italian films remains more operatic than the seemingly similar *cinéma vérité* of the French "New Wave" cinema of the 1960s. As Fellini later observed, what Rossellini taught him was "humility": "that it was possible to look at somebody or something, to consider a situation or some characters in an extremely simple way, and to try to relate what had been actually seen." But Fellini early on came to the conclusion that since the camera determines what is *not* seen as well as what *is* seen, there is never a simple recording of what is "really" out there.

Nonetheless, neo-realism represented an answer to the lies of Mussolini's Fascist regime, and Fellini refused to adhere to a party line, saying

> I have been reproached by some leftist journalists for having, in the face of reality, an evasive, shunning attitude, for not suggesting any aim or definite solution. . . . I performed an act of humility and told myself: It is quite true that [such directors as] Zavattini and Vittorio De Sica suggest subscribing to a certain political party. . . . They indoctrinate their characters, they show a way, and this means that they have a definite idea, which I have not. . . . The only thing I might offer my characters, who are always very much oppressed with sorrows and misfortunes, is my sympathy. I might, in a word, say: "Listen, I could not explain what is wrong, but I sympathize with you and sing a serenade for you."

In *Nights of Cabiria*, for example, Fellini conceived Cabiria as a woman who lives "like a rat in terrible surroundings, being crushed by reality all the time, but going innocently and having this mysterious faith through life." Cabiria is a young, naive streetwalker who searches for love and fulfillment in every man she meets but who finds only indifference or betrayal. At the end, after she has been swindled out of everything, and while young, prosperous revelers dance around her on scooters, Cabiria gives us a look of rueful hope—as though to say both that she will always be bamboozled and yet will never lose hope. And the palpable love that Fellini shows for his character in *Nights of Cabiria* shines through all his films.

That's how he could use actors off the streets of Rome, for he wasn't interested in his characters' inner development. From the many actors in *Ciao, Federico!*, a film about Fellini's making of *Satyricon*, we discover, "He's thirsty for people. To know them feeds him." "He doesn't know how to say no, so he says yes to everybody." "He loves only memories." *Intervista*, his valentine to Rome's film studios, takes the form of a constantly interrupted interview of Fellini by a pair of young Japanese film intellectuals who want him to say something profound. In one interruption, a passer-by yells at Fellini, "No more of your fat whores!" But Fellini always loved his fat whores—precisely because they express the fabulous, the grotesque, and the freaky in all humanity.

Thus Fellini ignored the usual structure of fiction: plot, character development, and conclusive finish. Indeed, in *Intervista*, Fellini shrugged off his "failure" to construct plots, saying (as if he couldn't control his own films), "First the story develops in one direction; then the film itself leads you elsewhere. Some scenes, some characters don't belong to the story anymore."

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Cineriz. Opposite page: Trans-Lux Films; Cineriz.

Marcello Mastroianni in 8½. Opposite: Anthony Quinn in La Strada *and Fellini directing 8½.*

And Fellini was always willing to desert what story he had for another look at his scenes and characters. At the conclusion of *Intervista*—a movie filled with the fake sets of real moviemaking—Fellini says, "We've wrapped this one, too. Now we all go home." The camera pans over debris blowing on an empty studio lot. Dogs wander around an empty building. But then, Fellini suddenly adds,

> *Ecco.* The film should end here. But I hear the word of an old producer of mine. "What? Without the faintest hope? Or ray of sunshine. Give me a ray of sunshine at the end of each film," he would beg. "A ray of sunshine." Well let's try.

A spotlight shines on the floor of the deserted set. And the familiar music by Nino Rota starts up—a haunting tune played by brasses that invokes the circus and outdoor processions. (Indeed, one can conjure up the atmosphere of a Fellini film just by hearing the characteristic music by Rota.)

The image of a shining spot on a dusty floor seems to reveal an essential falseness at the core of Fellini's films and, perhaps, of all moviemaking. Yet Fellini's stated ambition "to restore fantasy to the cinema" firmly centers on human lives and human dreams. The characteristic emotion evoked by Fellini's films is nostalgia—a bittersweet longing for things, persons, or situations of the past. But the past in Fellini is ever present. We do not experience catharsis in Fellini's films, but rather a heightened emotional interest in his people. This is the kind of feeling one ordinarily invests only in the things of the past.

The essence of nostalgia is that we have an emotional investment in the mysterious charge of life. Fellini's films recapture the emotionally powered mystery of childhood and transfer it to the present. We come to notice what we had long since stopped noticing; the familiar becomes unfamiliar, as if seen for the first time. Thus, although Fellini's films are crowded, they don't present "crowd scenes." What his crowds are doing is as important as what the lead characters are doing. His scenes are often full of people only peripherally related to each other, but living together—living in each other's pockets. Indeed, *La Dolce Vita* and *Amarcord* are less the stories of lead characters than stories of whole towns through which the lead character walks. *La Strada* is unusually plot-driven for a Fellini film, and yet even here one meets the fabulous crowd that typifies Fellini's work, ranging from carnivalesque throngs to knots of bored locals. In Fellini's eyes, individuals in a mass of humanity always carry the magic of fable—whether it is whores plying their trade, families out for an evening meal at a restaurant in the piazza, or even the buzzing *paparazzi* (a word Fellini coined in *La Dolce Vita*).

Perhaps the mystery that Fellini spots in a crowd is a special instance of "magic realism"—but instead of supernatural happenings in quotidian life, we get intense yearning in the daily round. Fellini's typical trick for evoking nostalgia is to set up the domestic as it "really is" and then to refuse to deliver an answer. He sneers at no one; we are all fools rather than knaves and deserve the indulgence of the director. "They're all a bunch of clowns," says a disappointed actress whose scene has been cut in *Intervista*. Fellini's love for all his characters projects not foolish naiveté but profound acceptance. A characteristic scene in *Intervista* has Italian Fascists, Native Americans, and Italian Victorian girls all in the same train, riding toward a film set. All the knaves are fools; and the past is always present.

The director's job in *Intervista* is, comically and significantly, to make a movie called "Kafka in America." He makes us realize again that the past is in the present; past and present interpenetrate and are indistinguishable. Fellini's exquisitely crafted cinema becomes a metaphor for human consciousness itself, where the past is *always* present. Fellini makes us believe that nostalgia is the definitive human emotion. ♦

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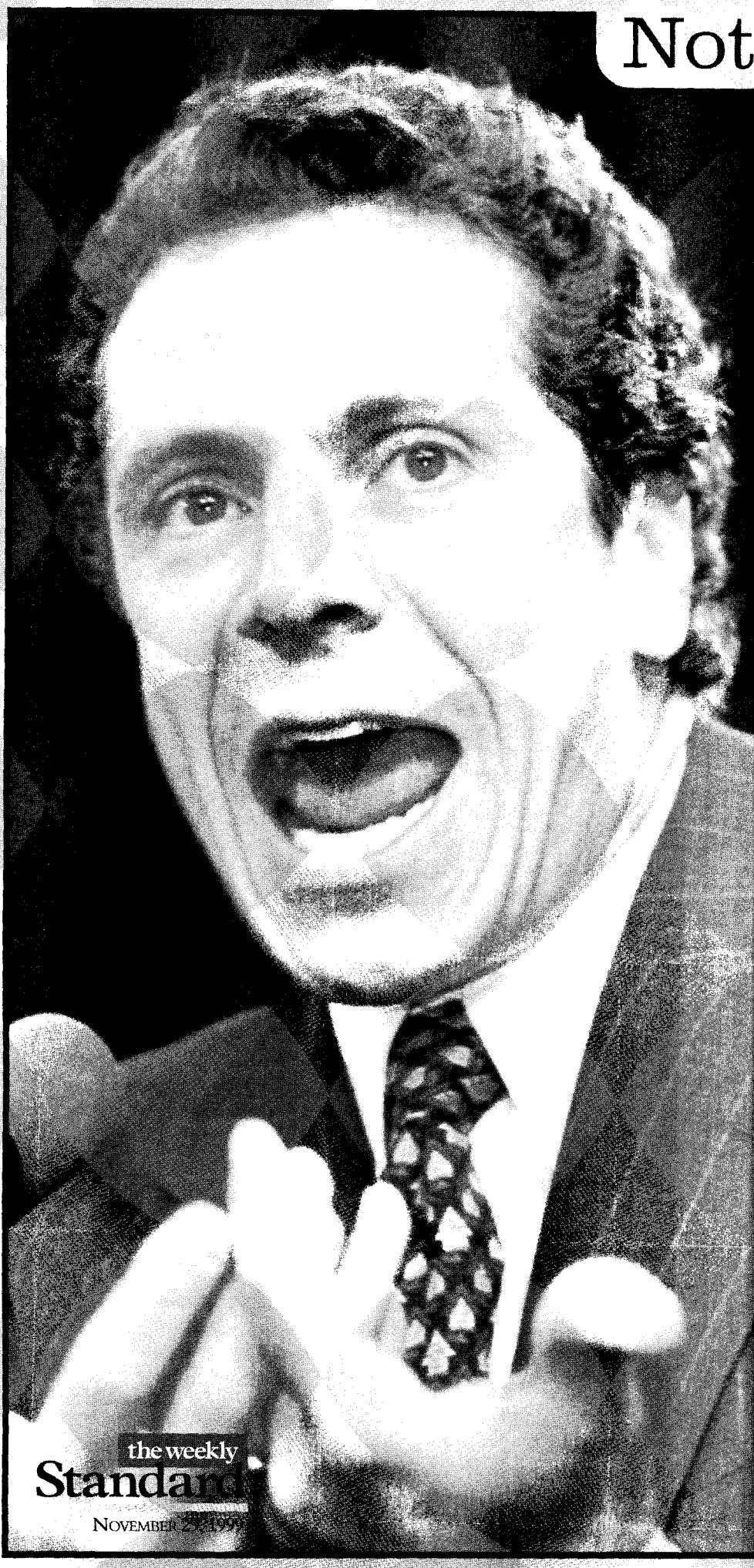
Not a Parody



AP/Wide World Photos

Andrew Cuomo's Creole Stew

The Department of Housing and Urban Development recently distributed a brochure, intended for tenants in subsidized housing, entitled "Resident Rights and Responsibilities." It appeared in various translations, including Spanish, French, Korean, and Portuguese. But it was the "Creole" translation—supposedly for Haitian speakers of the French-derived patois—that caused an uproar. In fact, as was first reported in Cecil Adams's syndicated feature "Straight Dope," the translation read like a tasteless parody. HUD has variously described the brochure as the fault of a contractor, the Government Printing Office, and some as yet unknown prankster. HUD officials have promised to investigate further. Meantime, all remaining copies of the Creole brochure have been destroyed. Well, not quite all. Below is an excerpt from the brochure in "HUD Creole": the message to residents from the HUD secretary.

"Wi ave a pawtnaship wid everi rezedent of HUD-assisted owzing developments: HUD prowtekss di rights ahf di tenants, ahn tenants gauwd dem own right tru rispansible be'aviah. Owah goal is fi guh beyan dat pawtnaship ahn create a sense ahf community by encouraging di rezedents fi bekum more aktiv ahn invalve demselves inna de decishans dat ahfek di developmnet ahf deir own owzing developments.

Sekretary Andrew M. Cuomo fella"

the weekly Standard
November 29, 1999

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Why Are Minimum Wages So Popular?

Thomas MaCurdy is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution and a professor of economics at Stanford University.

As in 1996, when we last saw an increase in the federal minimum wage from $4.25 to $5.15 an hour, political pressure is once again building to raise it by another $1. What accounts for the popularity in the minimum wage? Two beliefs! First, that raising the minimum wage is an effective antipoverty program and, second, that the minimum wage imposes little social cost. Anyone holding either view should acquaint themselves with the facts.

When considering the first belief, understand that most low-wage workers are not in poor families and that the bulk of the increased earnings attributable to raising the minimum wage does not accrue to low-income families. According to a variety of professional studies, only about one in four low-wage workers resides in families in the bottom 20 percent of the income distribution, and less than one in five dollars of the additional earnings goes to families who rely on low-wage compensation as their primary source of income. Moreover, as a pretax increase, many of the additional earnings are taxed away as Social Security contributions or as state and federal income taxes.

This brings us to the second common belief: Minimum wage hikes are manna from heaven–wages will rise and no one will bear the cost. This, of course, cannot be true. No one argues that artificially raising wages makes the economy more productive and actually boosts total national income. So the logic is inescapable. If low-wage workers receive more income after a minimum wage hike, someone must be paying for it.

When pressed, most minimum wage advocates suggest that "slight" price increases will be the primary source for paying for legislated wage increases. They heartily reject the view that low-wage workers will pay much directly through job loss or lowered employee benefits. An alternative is that firms will pay for those wage increases through lower profits, but it is unlikely that firms would bear significant profit losses without eliminating jobs. In relying on higher prices for covering mandated increases in wages, job loss can be kept to a minimum.

But then the question becomes, Who pays the higher prices to cover costs? A comprehensive analysis of the 1996 federal hike in the minimum wage estimates that prices rose on a broad range of commodities to fund this increase and that families of all income groups purchase these goods. Families in the lowest 20 percent of the income distribution pay annually an average of $61 in higher commodity costs, whereas families in the highest 20 percent pay only $150 more. The implied coverage of costs is at least as regressive as a conventional sales tax. Moreover, nearly 75 percent of poor families receive no additional earnings, but all paid higher costs following the minimum wage.

In fact, then, increasing the minimum wage amounts to a policy that artificially raises prices in an income-regressive manner, using the proceeds to pay higher earnings to workers in one in four families selected irrespective of their income. One wonders why such a policy enjoys the popularity it does.

— Thomas MaCurdy

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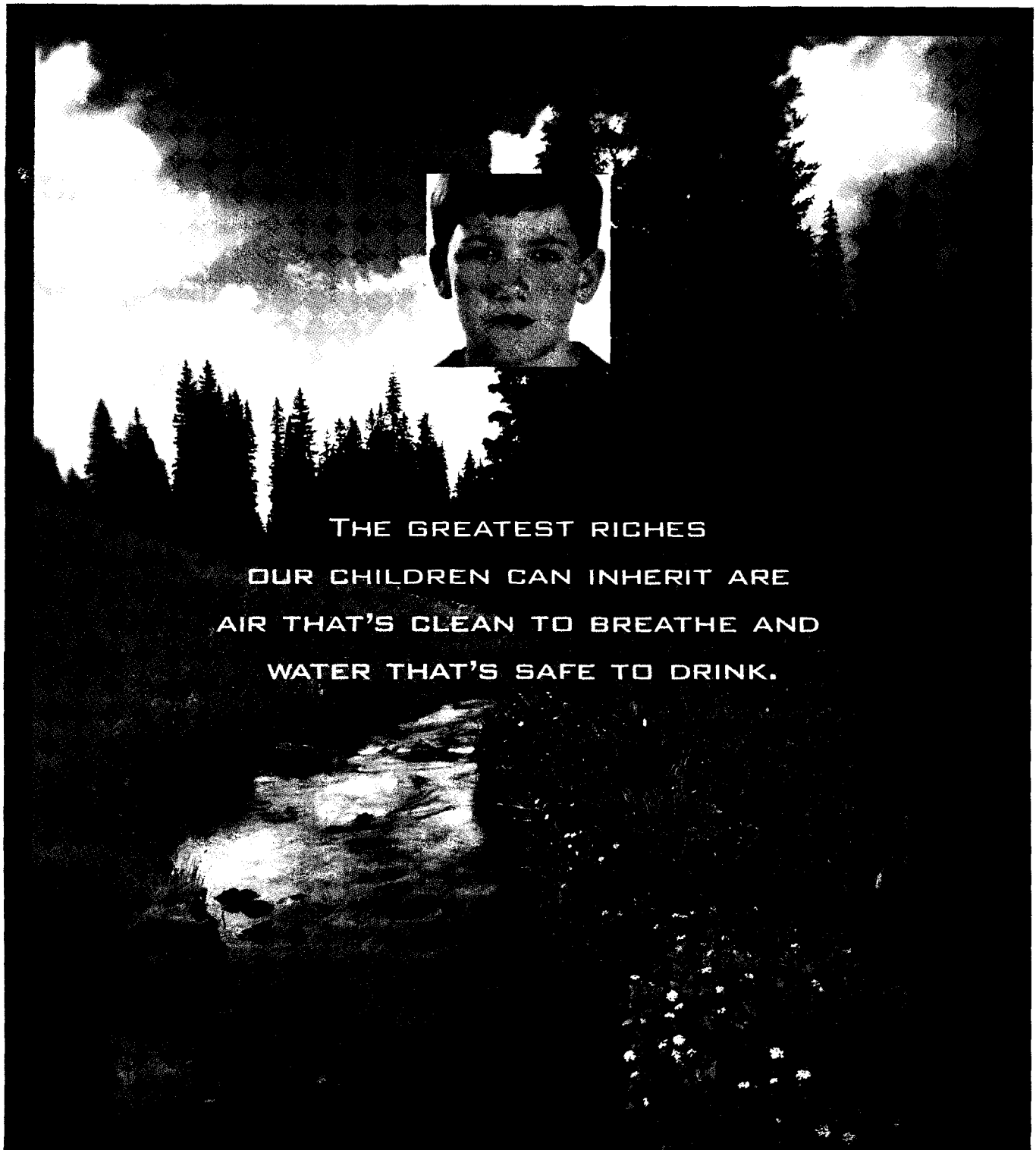

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